

# A MUNICIPAL COMPREHENSIVE DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR TOWNSEND, DELAWARE 2020

## Introduction

This 2020 comprehensive development plan is intended to serve as a document for the future development of the Town of Townsend. It will be the guide for the planning efforts of the community and its representatives. The comprehensive development plan will be in effect after being adopted by the Town Council, officially recognized by the State of Delaware, and certified by the Governor of Delaware.

The legal means for the implementation of the goals and objectives of this plan are included in zoning codes and other municipal codes and ordinances. Updating or revision of planning goals and objectives is essential to keep the planning program responsive to the changing needs of the community. The community's best interest and cooperative commitment along with the contribution efforts of the Town Council are needed to align the town's growth and development plans for the future. Practical planning and timely implementation of the goals and objectives of comprehensive development planning contributes to a higher quality of life in Townsend.

The plan is also an informational document for the public. Citizens, businesspeople, and government officials can turn to the plan to learn more about Townsend and its policies for future land use decisions. Potential new residents can use the document as an informational resource about the town, including its characteristics and facilities, to help them make decisions about moving to Townsend. This document contains the most current information on population, housing, land use, transportation and the environment, which may be of interest to land developers, economic-development professionals, and financiers.

Finally, the Town of Townsend comprehensive plan update is a legal document. The Delaware Code specifies that “. . . any incorporated municipality under this chapter shall prepare a comprehensive plan for the city or town or portions thereof as the commission deems appropriate.” The code further specifies, “after a comprehensive plan or portion thereof has been adopted by the municipality in accordance with this chapter, the comprehensive plan shall have the force of law and no development shall be permitted except as consistent with the plan.” (§ 702, Title 22, Delaware Code)

# Chapter 1. Background

## 1-1. The Authority to Plan

Delaware law requires that municipalities engage in comprehensive planning activities for the purpose of encouraging “the most appropriate uses of the physical and fiscal resources of the municipality and the coordination of municipal growth, development, and infrastructure investment actions with those of other municipalities, counties and the State...” This plan was written to comply with the requirements for a municipal development strategy as described in the Delaware Code (below) for towns with population of 2,000 or more.

The municipal comprehensive plan for communities (such as Townsend) with greater than 2,000 people is to be a “document in text and maps, containing at a minimum, a municipal development strategy setting forth the jurisdiction’s position on population and housing growth within the jurisdiction, expansion of its boundaries, development of adjacent areas, redevelopment potential, community character, and the general uses of land within the community, and critical community development and infrastructure issues.” (22 Del. C. 1953, § 702; 49 Del. Laws, c. 415, § 1.) The comprehensive plan for municipalities of greater than 2,000 population shall also contain, as appropriate to the size and character of the jurisdiction, a description of the physical, demographic and economic conditions of the jurisdiction; as well as policies, statements, goals and planning components for public and private uses of land, transportation, economic development, affordable housing, community facilities, open spaces and recreation, protection of sensitive areas, community design, adequate water and wastewater systems, protection of historic and cultural resources, annexation and such other elements which in accordance with present and future needs, in the judgement of the municipality, best promotes the health, safety, prosperity and general public welfare of the jurisdiction’s residents.” (22 Del. C. 1953, § 702; 49 Del. Laws, c. 415, § 1.)

In addition, the Town’s comprehensive-planning process must demonstrate coordination with other municipalities, the county, and the state during plan preparation. It represents the best judgments of the municipality and is written to promote the health, safety, and general public welfare of all residents. The plan is the basis for the development of zoning regulations, and once the plan is adopted “the comprehensive plan shall have the force of law and no development shall be permitted except as consistent with the plan” (22 Del. C. 1953, § 702; 49 Del. Laws, c. 415, § 1.). State law requires that planning be an ongoing process and that municipalities identify future planning activities. This document is Townsend’s Municipal Comprehensive Development Plan as required by state law. It is intended to cover a ten-year planning period and be reviewed at least every five years. In coordination with the proposal from New Castle County Planning for a Southern New Castle County Master Plan, an addition to plan to be considered is to extend the Town of Townsend Comprehensive Plan to include a 30-year plan. The concept of long-term planning will take into consideration many of the goals and objectives that are conducive to insure qualitative future land use outcomes. The need for

intergovernmental coordination and communication will assure seamless planning and coordination between the Town of Townsend, New Castle County and the State of Delaware.

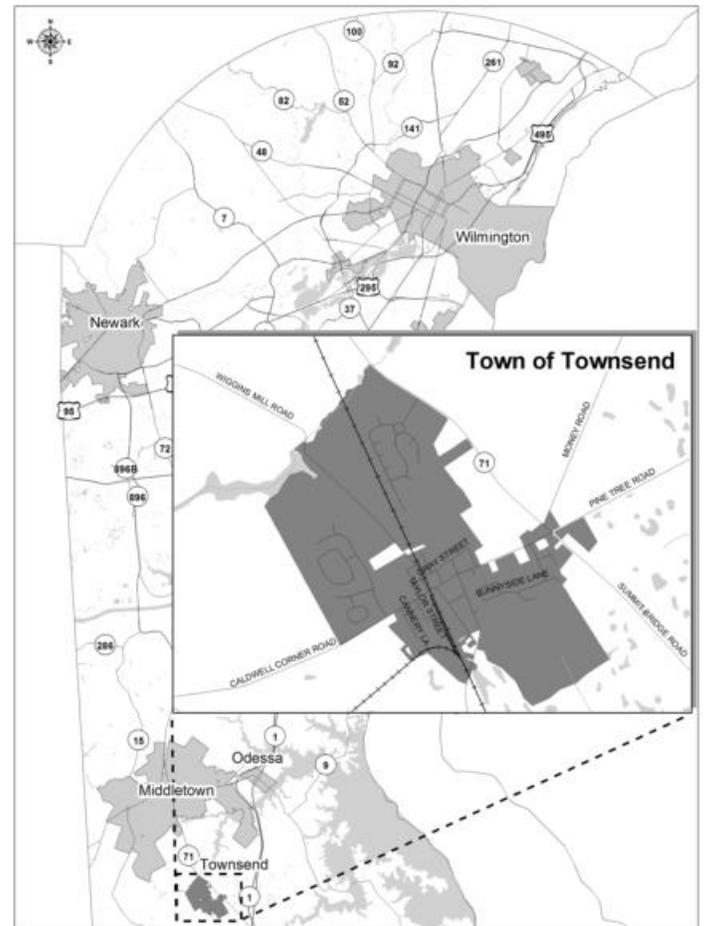
The Town’s first Comprehensive Plan was adopted and certified by the state in February 2003, amended in August 2003, and amended again in September 2005, with the assistance of Institute for Public Administration (IPA). The 2010 comprehensive plan update functioned as a stand-alone document that combined the previous planning work with new planning elements, replacing the 2003 Plan as the primary planning document for Townsend.

On April 16, 2016 Ordinance No. 16-03 passed and established the Townsend Planning Commission pursuant to 22 Del. C. § 701. The Commission replaced the Zoning Committee formed in 2013. This Commission will continue to assist the Town in its update efforts and facilitate its development by working with Town Council, encouraging the participation of residents and property owners in the planning process, and reviewing and refining planning policies.

## 1-2. A Brief Overview of the Community

### 1-2a. Location

Townsend is located in the southwestern portion of New Castle County, in what has traditionally been called the Middletown- Odessa-Townsend (M-O-T) planning region. Figure 1 shows the location of the Town relative to several other towns in New Castle County. The Town is located about 34 miles southwest of Wilmington, 24 miles south of Newark, and 23 miles northwest of Dover.





Once an isolated crossroads in 1856, Townsend was bisected by the railroad which created a more active shipping and commercial center by 1880. Tremendous growth in population and housing stock occurred at the turn of the twentieth century until about 1910. In 2010, the population and housing inventory surged to four times its previous size. (See Table 1)

### 1-3. Public Participation Process

The deliberations resulting in Townsend’s Comprehensive Plan Update were conducted in open, public meetings that began and were publicized according to the Freedom of Information Act guidelines (FOIA, 5 U.S.C 553). Public participation in the planning process was explicitly sought through a public survey published in 2018. The survey was revised in 2019 and published again at that time. In addition, members of the Planning Commission participated in the Townsend Fair on September 23, 2017 and a Town Hall meeting on October 4, 2017 with an informational board about the Commission, as well as a paper copy of a survey.

New Castle County held public workshops on the New Castle County Master plan on October 7, 2019 and June 24, 2019. The New Castle County Planning Advisory Group held a meeting on June 16, 2019, and a PLUS pre-review on May 22, 2019. On January 24, 2020, a meeting was held in Townsend with New Castle County (various departments), Town of Townsend Council and members of Townsend Planning Commission to discuss concerns, clarification and considerations of municipal coordination recommendations.

It is important to note that the completion of the Townsend Comprehensive Plan Update was prolonged in order to fully integrate and coordinate it with the Southern New Castle County (SNCC) Regional Master Plan. This coordinated effort with SNCC that was initiated in September of 2006 and driven by a formal Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) obtained in January of 2020. State agencies, school districts, New Castle County, Middletown, Odessa, Smyrna, and Townsend are all now coordinating the development of SNCC. The SNCC Master Plan study area was divided into five sub-areas, with Townsend being in the first sub-area to be studied. For additional details concerning the master-planning effort, see Chapter 3, Coordination and Implementation.

### 1-4. Town Goals

The following goals were developed in 2003 to provide general guidance for Townsend’s planning activities and were developed by referencing the Town’s previous plans and through discussions with Town officials and residents. In 2020, the Planning Commission revisited these goals and determined that all goals remain relevant. The goals provided below are what Townsend officials and citizens seek to accomplish through the implementation of this plan.

- Retain and reinforce the identity of the town and its setting within its immediate regional area.

- Preserve and enhance the town's social, cultural, aesthetic, and environmental amenities.
- Manage future land uses and transportation systems to adequately address patterns in town for the convenience and well-being of our residents, workers, and visitors.
- Coordinate the development of the town with that of the surrounding areas and with the plans of New Castle County and the state of Delaware.
- Provide adequate and efficient public facilities, utilities, and services to meet the needs of present and future residents.
- Coordinate, manage, and create future land uses in the commercial and/or industrial sectors to attract businesses and create new jobs.

These overall town goals are discussed in further detail in this document. More specific goals are also presented and discussed in the text where appropriate.

# Chapter 2. Municipal Development Strategy

## 2-1. Community Profile

This chapter provides details regarding Townsend’s past, estimated present, and projected future population. The data contained in this section may be useful in providing information regarding future service and facility needs, as well as information regarding anticipated changes in the social character of the Townsend community. Demographic data used in this planning document were collected from the 2010 and 2000 U.S. Census and other sources, such as the Delaware State Housing Authority, WILMAPCO, and the Delaware Population Consortium. When appropriate, comparisons have been made with New Castle County and the state of Delaware.

### 2-1a. Historic and Current Population

The U.S. Census indicates that from 1940 to 2015, the population and number of housing units for the state and the county steadily increased. As seen in Table 1, the town’s population peaked in 1940 at 544 and steadily declined until 1970, when it briefly rose to 505. By 2000, the population had dropped to 346. Since then, annexations and development have resulted in a large population projection surge to 2,593 for 2020 according to the October 2019 Delaware Population Consortium.

Table 1: History of Population and Housing Units for Townsend, New Castle County and Delaware

	Population			Housing Units		
	Delaware	New Castle County	Townsend	Delaware	New Castle County	Townsend
1940	266,505	179,562	544	75,567	47,588	116
1950	318,085	218,879	441	97,013	62,901	NA
1960	446,292	307,446	434	143,725	94,688	130
1970	548,104	385,856	505	180,233	120,704	140
1980	594,338	398,115	386	238,611	148,563	143
1990	666,168	441,946	322	289,919	173,560	152
2000	783,600	500,265	346	343,072	199,521	157
2010 <sup>1</sup>	897,934	538,479	2,050	405,885	217,511	620
2020 <sup>2</sup>	977,780	564,780	2,593	364,323	204,441	930 <sup>3</sup>

1-Source: U.S. Census 2100 Population: Delaware 2010: Population and Housing Unit Counts. Issued June 2012

2-Delaware Population Consortium October 31, 2019

3-Estimated using certificates of occupancy reported by the Town of Townsend between 2011 through 12/8/2020

## *2-1b. Population Projections*

Population and housing projections for Townsend are difficult to develop because of the town's small demographic base. Therefore, projections have been calculated using two methods. First, the Center for Applied Demography Survey and Research (CADSR) at the University of Delaware, in conjunction with the Delaware Population Consortium (DPC), has made 25-year projections based on historic growth rates and trends. Secondly, a build-out analysis was developed using the 2010 Census and Townsend vacant parcels and new developments that were annexed into the town. The population projection of 2,593 in 2020 reported in Table 1 was obtained from the Delaware Population Consortium data from October 31, 2019. A certificate of occupancy is issued by the local government when a building has been inspected and approved for habitation. According to the Town, 310 certificates of occupancy (CO) were issued between the 2010 Census and of Townsend's CO's issued as of December 8th of 2020. The number of certificates multiplied by 3.52—the current average number of people per household in Townsend—equates to an additional 1092 residents. When added to the 2,050 residents recorded from the 2010 Census, the estimated population is 3,142 residents in 2020. Using the same information, the total number of households in 2020 is estimated at 930 (620 from the 2010 Census plus 310 additional certificates of occupancy).

### *Method 1: DPC Data Comparing Townsend to New Castle County Growth Trends*

This method of estimating future population trends for Townsend is based upon Delaware Population Consortium projections for New Castle County. The October 31, 2019, version of the DPC Annual Population Projections was utilized for this purpose. The DPC takes into consideration actual births and deaths in the county since 2010 Census estimates, and migration patterns reported by the IRS. The DPC projected that Townsend will grow to the projected population in 2020 is 2,593. By 2030 the population will have grown to 3,021, it would be 3,538 by 2040, and it would be 4,182 by 2050. The estimated households in Townsend for 2010, was 586 per the 2010 Census. Assuming the future households grow at the same rate as New Castle County, there would be 597 in 2015, 603 in 2020, 612 in 2030. Per the COs that Townsend has currently recorded to through 12/8/2020, the number of households (930) has already exceeded the DPC Annual projections through 2050! Also, comparing the population projections using the current COs of 930 times the 3.52 multiplier shows that Townsend's population has already exceeded the DPC estimate of 3,021 for 2030! The results are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2: Delaware Population Consortium Data for New Castle County and Townsend

	2000	2010	2015	2020	2030	2040	2050
<b>New Castle County</b>							
Population	501,856	539,642	552,592 (+2.4%)	564,780 (+2.2%)	580,351 (+2.8%)	583,975	577,814
Households	189,852	198,499	202,268 (+1.9%)	204,441 (+1.1%)	207,355 (+1.4%)	205,534	199,784
<b>Townsend</b>							
Population	346		2,193	2,593	3,021	3,583	4,182
Population estimation on 3.52 multiplier of Certificates of Occupancy				3142			
Households	NA	586	597	603	612	621	630
Actual Certificate of Occupancy through 12/8/2020				930			

Source: Delaware Population Consortium, 10/31/2019

\*2010 Census-Table 7 Households

*Method 2: Future Build-Out Potential updates and numbers of built, lots, infill*

A second method used to project future population called a build-out analysis. This method begins with the same base population estimate of 2,050 in 2010. Future population is based on a consideration of the amount of vacant land in Townsend and the towns’ future land use policy and possible annexations. Several assumptions were made in calculating the population estimates associated with the build out. First, it was assumed that all currently vacant parcels identified for future residential use would develop residentially by 2030. Per information maintained by Townsend, as of February 2019 there were 23 vacant properties in Townsend, 8 are lots. As of this writing a further breakdown of vacant lots is: 11 vacant parcels in Townsend Village I and 8 in the “Heart of Townsend”. Also, there are 222 new parcels in The Woods At Hidden Creek that are zoned for single-family homes (R-2). The rest are zoned industrial, commercial, or preservation. If the number of parcels 241 is multiplied by the average household size of 3.52, then these parcels could possibly represent an additional 848 residents. Townsend recently approved the annexation of Townsend Acres 15.25 acres on December 12th that has the potential of producing double digit units and also increasing population numbers.

**Summary**

One assumption made for the build-out potential of Townsend was that the average household size for Townsend was 3.52 from the 2010 Census. Next it was assumed that residential development would take place at a uniform rate. Without conducting an extensive environmental-impact assessment, the amount of all environmentally sensitive areas and areas not suitable for building was estimated. Finally, it was assumed Hidden Creek would be developed to its maximum density allowed by current zoning regulations. Taking this into consideration, the maximum increase in population would be 1,792, bringing Townsend to a maximum possible population of 3,828 by the year 2030. There is a sewer agreement signed in 2001 that is in place for 25 years with automatic renewal option for an additional 5 years. This agreement states NCC supports existing customers and an additional capacity not to exceed 270,200 gallons per day. The county is willing to consider supporting sewer

capacity for the development of a commercial area along Route 71 in Townsend. The Woods At Hidden Creek has the potential to hold 222 dwelling units, Townsend Village I have the potential for 11 new units, and 8 additional lots in town. The results of the two population forecasts are shown in Table-3. This calculation does not take into consideration the newly annexed Townsend Acres. Also, with the extensive residential development in Townsend since 2010, it is obvious that assuming that Townsend will grow at a comparable rate to the rest of New Castle County is a highly inaccurate assumption.

Table 3 Future Population Projections, 2010 to 203

Population Projections	2010*	2015 <sup>1</sup>	2020 <sup>1</sup>	2030 <sup>1</sup>
Method 1: Comparison to NCC Growth Trends	2,050	2,193 (+1.9%)	2,593 (2.2%)	3,021 (1.4%)
Method 2: Build-Out Analysis	2,050	2,420** (+370)	2,980** (+560)	3,828*** (+848)

\*Census 2010

<sup>1</sup>Source: Delaware Population Consortium, 10/31/2019

\*\* certificates of occupancy

\*\*\*Assumed vacant lots & annexations complete

### 2-1c. Demographics

#### *General Characteristics*

A profile of general demographic characteristics for the year 2010 is presented in Table 4. While it is difficult to draw precise conclusions from this profile due to the relatively small demographic base of the town, certain trends can be noted. First, the median age of the town (31.3) is slightly younger than that of either the state (40.2) or the county (38.1). However, this trend could be offset in the future as development occurs in the newly annexed areas. Family households, including those with children under 18 years old, represent a significant larger portion of the town's population (69.52%) than in either the state (27%) or the county (28.8%). The average size of a household is larger than the state and county household sizes. Townsend's population that is 16 and over participating in the labor force is higher than state and county labor force numbers. Townsend's population that is of two or more races high is slightly higher than the state and county.

Table 4: Profile of General Demographic Characteristics

	Delaware	New Castle County	Townsend
Age			
Population 17 and under	21.4%	21.8%	34.3%
Population 62 and older	18.7%	15.6%	14.5%
Median age	39.6	38.1	31.3
Households			
Households with children under 18	35.4%	24.7%	38.6%
Average household size	2.56	2.63	3.52
Selected Characteristics			
Population 18 and over who are	9.0%	7.1%	7.9%
Population 16 and over in labor	62.7%	65.3%	72.2%
Population 18 and over with an	24.3%	23.7%	22.6%
Population of Two or more races	2.7%	2.5%	3.6%

Source: Census 2010  
2018 ACS 5-year Est Data Profiles Table DP03, DP05

#### *Diversity Composition*

As noted in Table 5 from U.S. Census data, Townsend’s population in the year 2010 was more diverse than that of either New Castle County or the state except when comparing the Hispanic community. Townsend still lags behind the county and state in that ethnicity.

Table 5: Ethnic Composition

	Townsend	New Castle County	Delaware
Racial Composition			
White	62.7%	65.0%	68.9%
Black	31.8%	26.1%	21.4%
Other	5.5%	8.9%	9.7%
Ethnic Composition			
Non-Hispanic	95.8%	89.7%	90.5%
Hispanic	4.2%	10.3%	9.5%

Source: Census 2010

#### *Education*

As summarized in Table 6 and reported by the U.S. Census, the overall educational attainment level for Townsend’s population 25 years old and above was higher than that of either the county or the state.

Table 6: Educational Attainment Level for 25 Years Old or Above

	High School Graduate Or Higher	Bachelor’s Degree Or Higher
Townsend	94.3%	38.2%
New Castle County	91.5%	35.9%
State of Delaware	89.8%	31.4%

Source: 2018 ACS 5-year Est Table DP02

*2-1d. Housing*

Table 7 summarizes the number of dwelling units from 1940 to 2010 in Townsend, New Castle County, and the state. Historically, Townsend has increased its housing stock at a slower rate than the county and the state. However, as mentioned previously, by using the number of certificates of occupancy issued since 2010 and adding that number to the housing stock in 2010, the estimated available housing units in 2010 was 621. The 2018 ACS housing estimate has Townsend growing at 4.2% compared to New Castle at 2.1% and 5.5% for the State.

Table 7: Total Housing Units in Townsend, New Castle County, and the State

Year	Townsend	New Castle County	Delaware
1940	116	47,588	75,567
1950	NA	62,901	97,013
1960	130	94,688	143,725
1970	140	120,704	180,233
1980	143	148,563	238,611
1990	152	173,560	289,919
2000	157	199,521	343,072
2010	621	217,511	405,885
2018	647	222,146	428,251

Source: Census 2010, Delaware State Housing Authority, Townsend Certificates of Occupancy  
2018 ACS 5-yr Estimate Table DP04

It is important to note that as of this writing there were also 11 vacant parcels pending construction in Townsend Village I. Additionally, there were approximately 8 vacant residential lots within the original town boundaries, and an additional 222 vacant parcels annexed since, for a total of 241 vacant residential lots. These lots have been zoned for single-family, residential uses at varying densities.

*Age of Housing Stock*

According to the 2018 ACS, 15.9% of the housing in Townsend was built before 1960. However, since the 2010 Census, Townsend has greatly increased the number of housing units by developing areas annexed in 1999 and 2010. As shown in Table 8, approximately 72.6% of the housing stock was built between 2000 and 2019. Current housing units within town is 780 homes. With the completion of TVII and TVI almost completed, this will skew the year housing is built.

Table 8: Year Housing Built

	Townsend <sup>±</sup> (percent)	New Castle County <sup>**</sup> (percent)	Delaware <sup>**</sup> (percent)
2014 or later	4.3%	1.5%	2.4%
2010-2013	12.2%	2.2%	3.9%
2000-2009	56.1%	10.6%	18.9%
1990-1999	4.6%	14%	16%
1980-1989	1.4%	12.7%	13.7%
1970-1979	2.0%	12.7%	11.9%
1960-1969	3.4%	14.3%	10.3%
1940-1959	5.4%	21.1%	14.6%
1939 or earlier	10.5%	10.9%	8.3%

Source: 2018: ACS 5-year Estimates Table DP04

*Type of Housing*

Table 9 shows the type of housing in Townsend in 2019. The most-up-to date information for the state and county is from 2018. Currently, 94.9% of all housing units in Townsend are single-family detached homes, an increase of 2.4% from 92.5% in 2010. This is a much higher percentage than found across the county (53.5%) or state (58.8%). This trend is expected to continue as newly annexed parcels of The Woods At Hidden Creek (Carter Farm) are all zoned R-2, residential with a minimum lot requirement of 7,000 square feet (.16 acres), allowing only single-family, detached dwelling units. In order to diversify housing types, the Town has proposed to add additional zoning codes that would allow higher densities and mix of uses.

Table 9: Housing Type

Housing Type	Townsend	New Castle County	Delaware
Single-Family, Detached	94.9%	53.5%	58.8%
Single-Family, Attached	2.5%	21.2%	15.3%
Multi-Family (2-20+ units)	2.1%	23.2%	17.5%
Other	0.5%	2.1%	8.4%

Source: 2018 ACS 5-year Estimates Table DP04

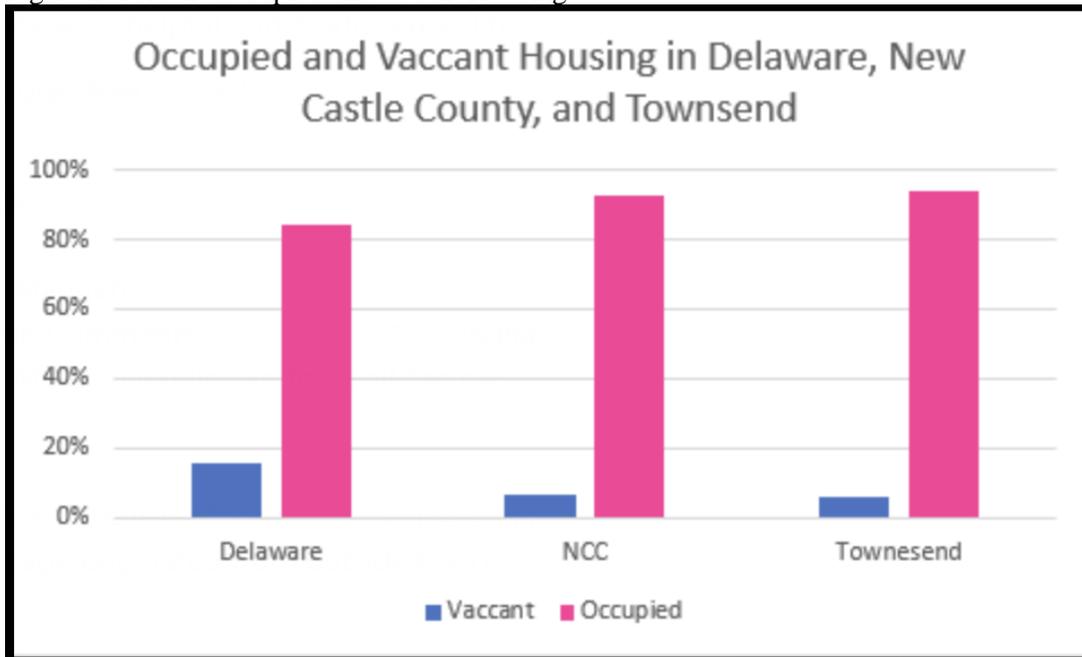
*Housing Value*

According to the 2010 ACS 5-Year Estimates Table DP04, the median housing values were significantly more expensive, on average, in Townsend (\$289,900) than in the county (\$252,800) or state (\$242,300). Reviewing the 2018 ACS 5-Year Estimates Table DP04 data available for Townsend, the median housing price has increased from \$289,900 to \$324,700. This reflects a 12% increasing in housing value for the Townsend. The county and state median housing value also increased but at a much-reduced level. New Castle County median house value was \$254,500 (0.6%) and overall state median price is \$244,700 (0.99%) per the 2018 ACS 5-Year Estimate

### *Ownership and Vacancy*

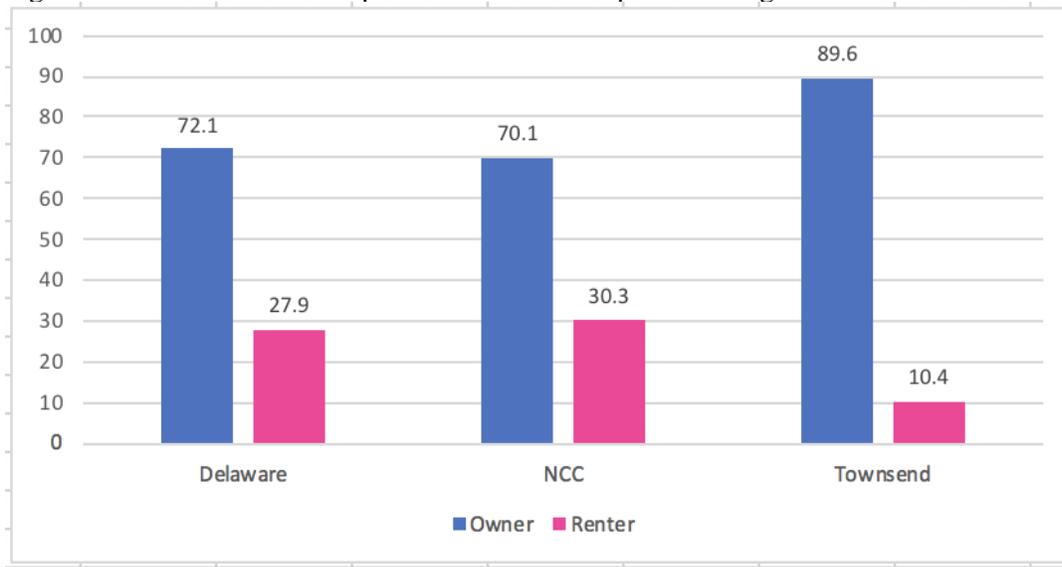
Information from the 2010 Census regarding the occupancy status of housing units in Townsend is shown in Figures 2 and 3. At that time, Townsend had a lower percentage of vacant properties than did the county or the state. The housing that is vacant (5.6%) is probably so because it is either for rent or for sale. Figure 3 shows that Townsend has a higher percentage of owners than renters than has either the county or the state. It is likely that this trend from the 2010 Census has continued, since the majority of the additional homes in town are new, larger, more expensive units built specifically for a customer.

Figure 2: Percent Occupied and Vacant Housing



Source: Census 2010

Figure 3: Percent Owner-Occupied and Renter-Occupied Housing for 2010



Source: Census 2010

### 2-1e. Economic Profile

Table 10 shows selected economic information for Townsend, New Castle County, and the state of Delaware. The median household income in Townsend was 66% higher than that of the rest of New Castle County, and 79.7% higher than the median income in the state. The data also shows that Townsend has a lower percentage of residents with social security and retirement income than New Castle County and of the state. This is indicative of a higher number of working families in the community. Also, individuals in Townsend who received public assistance is significantly less than public assistance received in both the county and the state. Townsend does have a higher level of poverty among the 65+ population.

Table 10: Economic Information

	Townsend	Middletown	New Castle County	Delaware
Median Household Income	\$117,964	\$89,354	\$70,996	\$65,627
Households with Social Security	8.7%	33.1%	29.2%	34.5%
Households with retirement income	16.2%	26.2%	20.7%	24.5%
Households with public assistance income (cash, food stamps)	4.6%	5.8%	11.9%	13.8%
Individuals under 17 below the poverty level	7.3%	10.7%	15.6%	17.6%
Individuals 65 & older below the poverty level	10.4%	2.4%	6.8%	6.6%

Source: 2018: ACS 5yr Est. Data Profiles Table DP03

Table 10a: 2020 Federal Poverty Level

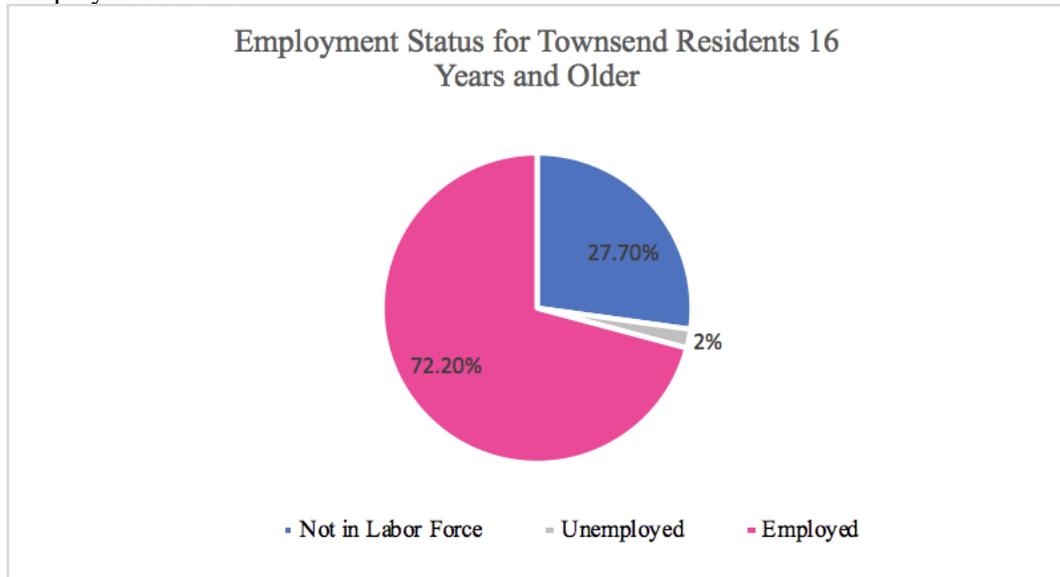
Number of Persons in Family/Households	Poverty Guideline
1	\$12,760
2	\$17,240
3	\$21,720
4	\$26,200
5	\$30,680
6	\$35,160
7	\$39,640
8	\$44,120
9	Add \$4,480 for each additional person over 8

Source: Office of the Asst. Secretary for Planning and Evaluation-Dept. Health & Human Services January 2020

*Unemployment Data*

Figure 4 displays the unemployment status for residents of Townsend. Of the Townsend residents over the age of 16, about 72.2 percent were employed according to the 2018 ACS data, and 2 percent were unemployed. Residents not in the labor force was 27.8 percent of the population. which may be explained by the high number of retirees living in Townsend. Approximately 18.7 percent of the households have some sort of retirement income.

Figure 4: Employment Status



Source:-2018 ACS- 5year Est. Table DP03

## 2-1f. Housing Affordability

Significant changes in the housing market make an accurate assessment of housing affordability in Townsend somewhat problematic. Rapid growth in the residential construction market during the past decade severely inflated home prices. This was particularly true in the M-O-T region, which saw explosive, nearly unchecked growth for much of this time period. As happened elsewhere, the price of homes in Townsend’s existing (2000 and earlier) housing stock rose substantially. Compounding the problem was the construction of hundreds of new homes, almost all of them larger (in square footage and lot size) than the town’s typical housing size. The number of homes built in Townsend from 2000 to 2007 is roughly equal to the total number built during the previous three decades. This growth has not slowed with an additional 347 Certificate of Occupancies issued and homes built from 2008-present. Predictably, the new homes sold for a significantly higher amount. The preponderance of newer, larger, more expensive homes also served to inflate the municipality’s median housing value. Since 2007, Handler Homes built 163 homes in Townsend Village and an additional 95 homes in Townsend Village II. There were multiple builders in Townsend Village II, and it is not known exactly how many of the 221 homes were built after 2007.

After the housing market correction, the entire state of Delaware saw moderate gains in housing values. The largest housing increase was seen in Townsend. This would be explained by the large homes that were being built.

The determination of affordability is a fairly straightforward process. Estimates of median household income are compared to estimates of median home values. Housing is considered affordable if there are opportunities for homeownership for individuals making less than the median amount—typically 80 percent.

The current data from the American Communities Survey (ACS) shown in Table 11, reflects a 45% increase in housing values in Townsend since the 2009 estimate.

Table 11: Median Housing Values

Jurisdiction	Value in 2000	Value in 2009	Value in 2018	Increase
New Castle County	\$136,000	\$225,000	\$254,500	13.1%
Middletown	\$119,600	\$275,000	\$288,400	4.9%
Townsend	\$97,500	\$224,000*	\$324,700	45%
Kent County	\$114,100	\$200,000	\$213,900	7%
Sussex County	\$122,400	\$180,000	\$248,900	38.3%

Source: 2000 Census and DSHA Real Estate Data (2nd quarter 2009)

\*2000 Census value multiplied by 130%

2018 ACS: 5yr Estimated Data Profiles

While home values increased rapidly, median family incomes (MFI) increased at a more modest pace. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) released MFI estimates, accounting for inflation and other variables, based on the *American Communities Survey* (ACS), a sort of mini- census done each year. The 2018 ACS median family income is shown below that compares New Castle County and Townsend.

Table 12: Median Family Income

	2000	2008	2018
New Castle County	\$58,760	\$71,647	\$88,300
Townsend	\$47,500	\$57,918*	\$118,250

Source: 2018 ACS 5-year Est table DP03

Table 13 illustrates this apparent contradiction between median family income and median home value. The table shows that families in the 100-percent MFI category would still not be able to afford the median priced home in Townsend. However, it is likely that the median home value is more reflective of the larger, newer homes that are currently selling and have sold at a much higher price than older homes in the town. A quick search of listings using Zillow show the most recent home sales for April/May of 2020 resulted in several homes sold from \$65,000 to \$420,000 range. Also, a Zillow search of current homes for sale in Townsend resulted in an average list price of \$226,400. These homes are located in the “heart” of town.

Table 13: Home Affordability by Median Family Income

	60% MFI	80% MFI	100% MFI
	\$70,950	\$94,600	\$118,250
Three-Times Rule	\$212,850	\$283,800	\$354,750
DSHA Calculator	\$47,888	\$63,851	\$79,814
HUD-DE	\$58,140	\$77,520	\$96,900
Median Estimated Value of Townsend Home			\$324,700
Average Cost of Five Most Affordable Homes Zillow-Townsend 5/12/20			\$226,400

Source: 2018 ACS 5-year Est table DP03, HUD FY2020 MFI, Zillow.com“Townsend”

Though the analysis is not definitive, Townsend appears to have a supply of affordable housing, despite newer home values continuing to increase. The downturn in the housing market during 2007-2008 has the trend of runaway housing prices and created an opportunity for investment and rental homes in the “heart” of Townsend. Additional data review suggests that there may be a market for more rental units in town with the continued disparity in family income and new housing prices. Smaller home options, such as townhomes and ranch living, may be an option to make Townsend more affordable to families and seniors while maintaining the small town feel and community that Townsend offers.

## Housing Plan Recommendations

- Coordinate with DSHA and HUD to create a resource library for current and potential residents, detailing local, state, and federal homeownership/mortgage-assistance programs.
- Encourage the development of a variety of housing types, including more-compact alternatives to the two-story single-family home, such as ranch style, townhomes and condos.
- Consider making provisions for multi-use or accessory dwelling units in the municipal code to allow for an increase in the supply of rental properties while creating a small business district in the “heart” of town.

### *2-1g. Community Profile Implications, Critical Issues & Future Needs*

There are a number of implications stemming from these trends, and many recommendations addressing these issues are outlined in future sections. Although the town could not possibly address all of these issues, it should be aware of possible problems and be looking for partners in meeting the needs of all of its residents.

#### *Public Safety*

As a town grows, there continues to be an increased need for police. Townsend has worked with the University of Delaware to investigate options to improve law enforcement within the town. Options include coordination with the Middletown Police Department, New Castle County Police, or Delaware State Police, and/or creating a Townsend police department. An additional option calls for the creations of a regional police force to address public safety and security concerns that will inevitably occur with the increase in population and community density.

Although the elderly population is actually decreasing from 14.5% to 5.7%, combined with the population of disabled residents increasing slightly from 19.9% to 22.6%, it may be necessary for the town to assist the volunteer fire company in increasing the capacity of its emergency medical services to provide the best service to residents.

#### *Transportation*

There has been an increase in the percentages of children under the age of 17 (from 26.9% to 34.3%) and disabled residents (22.6%), as well as all of Townsend households now owning at least one vehicle. These people may be dependent on walking, biking, and public transit for transportation. Elderly and disabled residents do have access to paratransit through DART First State and the MOT Senior Service Bus, but additional sources of public transportation may be needed. Due to the rapid change in population, there is a need for a traffic study (Railroad Avenue, Commerce Street, Main Street, Route 25, South Street, Wiggins Mill Road). The requests for traffic studies have received no response. Townsend has made road improvements

to Main Street which has resulted in the road now being used as a bypass for the 301 Toll Road. Route 15 needs to be developed as a north/south throughway for the western part of the state. The NCC Master Plan desires an “employment zone” in Middletown and is denying the opportunity for this growth type in Townsend.

To ensure walkability of the downtown area, a streetscape/safe corridor project that included sidewalks compliant with Americans with Disabilities Act, as well as ample street lighting was completed in 2014 for the first phase. Phase 2 was completed in 2020. Phase 3 is pending funding. Phase 3 will go from Railroad/Commerce Street to Katlyn. (start date unknown). As the town continues to grow it is imperative to continue the sidewalk system. Currently, the local park is not safely accessible to all developments in Townsend. Research should be completed to review the open space of newer developments and to create walkable paths to provide access to the park. Town should continue to all new development is pedestrian-oriented. Additionally, children need to have a safe pathway to the assigned school bus stops throughout town. This may require coordination with the different school bus companies and the school district office. Additionally, more open spaces should be planned to include trails that enhance the interconnectivity of these open spaces.

#### *Maintenance of Homes*

The age of the existing housing stock and the percentage of rental units in the town indicate that housing maintenance may become an issue for the town in the future. Older homes have more maintenance needs, and about 19.6% of the existing homes are more than 50 years old. As seen in Table 9, the number of houses built since 2000 has dramatically increased. This creates a dichotomy of aging downtown residences surrounded by newer subdivisions. Elderly residents, disabled residents, single- parent households, those with fixed and/or limited incomes may have more problems than most in properly maintaining a home. An ordinance was implemented to inspect rental units to ensure they are in compliance with the code and also protect the tenants from properties that are not being properly maintained by the property owner.

#### *Recreation and Childcare*

Because of the high proportion of residents aged 17 and under (34.3%), there is a need for more educational and recreational facilities for children in Townsend. The Town does not track in-home businesses, but it is estimated that there are, three in-home childcare facilities, a privately owned commercial childcare center, and an early childhood development center at Townsend Elementary are located in town. An 11.5-acre municipal park provides space for recreation and summer camps, and the town should continue to form relationships with local community groups, such as the YMCA of Delaware, to provide recreational opportunities in town. A community center that will partner with the M-O-T Senior Center to provide programs for the elderly residents could assist in maintaining and possibly increasing the elderly population in Townsend which has dropped to 5.7%. In an effort to build a resilient and engaged community, there is a need for a community center to include youth programs, senior programs, and other town events.

### *Diverse Housing Types*

Single-family, detached homes are the most common housing type in Townsend (97.4%). In order to provide housing for a growing population that is economically diverse, Townsend needs to diversify its housing market. In addition, the fire company has raised concerns that the volunteers are no longer able to afford to live in Townsend, which has created problems with recruiting EMTs who live close enough to respond to emergencies. Children of long-time residents in town are finding it increasingly difficult to purchase real estate in Townsend due to the dramatic increase in housing values over the past few years. The town must work on providing adequate housing for a more diverse range of income levels. Townsend understands the importance of diversifying their housing types and are entertaining the idea of townhomes, condo, apartments, and smaller homes.

## 2-2. Government, Community Services, and Facilities

*GOAL: Provide adequate and efficient public facilities, utilities, and services to meet the needs of present and future residents.*

### 2-2a. Town Government

Townsend is an incorporated area with powers granted it by the state to govern itself through its elected officials and authorized appointees. The powers of the town were established in its charter, which was approved by the Delaware General Assembly in 1885 and most recently amended in 2015. The Town of Townsend has adopted a Council Manager form of government. The Town Manager serves as the Chief Operating Officer with administrative oversight over all town departments and personnel. The elected governing body consists of a five-member Town Council, comprising a mayor and four councilpersons. The Mayor is elected by a majority vote from the newly elected council each year. Two councilpersons are elected on even years, and three councilpersons are elected on odd years. The Town Council meets the first Wednesday of each month at the Town Hall.

The Town has established a Planning Commission and solicits volunteers for serving on the commission. The proposed commission has three members appointed on the even years and two appointed on the odd years and acts as an advisory body to the council with the major responsibility of interpreting and recommending revisions to the town's zoning ordinance and maps and updating the town's comprehensive development plan. The commission is responsible for arranging public hearings for proposed subdivision plans and forwarding the committee's recommendations on subdivision plans to mayor and council.

Townsend also has a Board of Adjustment to hear appeals and grants variances. According to the town's Unified Development Code, the Board currently been comprised of three members. The Board hears and decides appeals where it is "alleged there is an error in any order, requirement, decision or determination made by and administrative official in the enforcement

of the Town's codes and the laws of the State of Delaware and any amendment thereto . . .” (Section 901 UDC).

The Mayor, with the confirmation of a majority of the Council, appoints standing or *ad hoc* committees as deemed necessary. To date, council committees include a Community Relations, Finance, Human Resources, Land Use and Development, National Wildlife Federation liaison, Parks and Recreation, Public Safety, and Veterans.

The Town has several full-time employees including the Town Manager, Financial Officer, Town Clerk, Administrative Assistant, and Maintenance Manager. Townsend has professional services contracts for the positions of Code Enforcement, Town Engineer, and Town Attorney. The Town Manager is appointed by Town Council and serves as the Chief Operations Officer of the Town. There is a Town Clerk has the power to certify town documents. The Town Attorney is appointed by Council and provides legal advice to the Council and other town officers and departments. The Town-Financial Officer is responsible for the disbursement of monies and has control over town expenditures. The Town Engineer is a consulting firm contracted with by the council, and it is responsible for reviewing subdivision plans, certifying building plans for the issuance of building permits, and maintaining the town's Zoning Map. Townsend can also utilize commercial contracts to maintain local streets and sidewalks in common areas and town parks.

### Government Critical Issues & Future Needs

#### *Planning Commission Members*

The Town should actively engage new volunteers for the Planning Commission to assist Town Council with the numerous development issues facing Townsend.

#### *Historic Review Criteria for Future Development*

The Town should designate criteria for historic review or design review as part of the Planning Commission review to help the town meet its historic preservation goals. This criterion will help determine if proposed renovations will preserve the historic and architectural integrity.

#### *Annexation Process*

The sewer agreement signed between New Castle County and Townsend requires that all annexations be approved by both New Castle County Council and the New Castle County Executive. The current sewer agreement with NCC is in place until 2025, at which time the Town will need to re-evaluate its relationship with the county or need to locate alternative wastewater treatment. Additionally, all annexations are required to be consistent with a state-certified comprehensive plan and follow a multi-jurisdictional public process.

The proposed annexation area must be zoned at the time of annexation, and there must be a plan of service for the area certifying that capacity exists to provide all public services. A more systematic annexation process will help achieve one of the plan goals to coordinate the development of the town with that of the surrounding areas and with the plans of New Castle County and the state of Delaware.

#### *Development Infill within Town Limits*

Future development could target vacant lots and/or dilapidated properties within the Town limits prior to approving annexation for new construction. Targeting infill may assist with growth while maintaining compliance with the terms of the MOA with New Castle County to provide sewer service.

#### *Staff*

As the town continues to grow in size, additional employees may be needed in order to provide services to the town's residents and businesses. The Town may consider hiring a Code Enforcement Officer and creating a Public Works Department. The potential increase in open areas and stormwater infrastructure, may require additional personnel. The Town is currently investigating the feasibility of a municipal police department.

#### *Charter Update*

The Town Charter was updated in 2015. The Town may need to update its charter to accurately reflect annexation procedures, planning commission and board of adjustment responsibilities, and the new town boundary that includes annexations. The Town should continue to communicate with their legislators to complete the update.

#### *Zoning and Unified Development Code (Chapter 66)*

The current ordinance was updated in 2020 and is fairly comprehensive. Updates to the Zoning and Unified Development Code is currently under review with the updating of the Comprehensive Plan. The updates to the ordinance plan included changes to the ordinance, some of which are discussed in other sections of this report. In particular, additional zoning categories were added and an ordinance specifying the plan-approval process.

#### Government Goal

Develop, maintain, and enforce processes, such as land use controls that ensure the proper government procedures are followed and the intents and principles of this comprehensive plan are achieved.

#### Government Recommendations

- Need to continue to develop a systematic written process for annexations to conform to state law and the New Castle County sewer agreement and include systematic notification to New Castle County.

- The Town should review its charter to include addressing the current description of the town's boundaries and updated procedures.
- The Town should consider hiring additional employees, to create a Public Works Department.
- The Town should encourage development to infill vacant and/or dilapidated properties within Town municipal boundaries.
- Coordinate with surrounding areas, Middletown, Odessa and New Castle County.
  
- Review past amendments to review if applicable to current town comprehensive plan.

## 2-2b. Community Services

Community services and facilities must be provided to meet the present and future needs of the community. Community services and facilities discussed herein include public safety (police, fire, and ambulance service), parks, recreation, and open space, as well as stormwater management, street maintenance, and trash removal. Other facilities discussed in this section include meeting space, healthcare services, and educational facilities. Other jurisdictions, private utilities, and other organizations may provide some of these needs but overall, they are critical to the quality of future development in Townsend.

Issues that will become critical with future growth are police protection, maintenance of local streets, and services such as trash collection, building inspection, and stormwater maintenance. The town may need to consider expanding municipal services that will support the needs of a town comparable to the size that Townsend will become when expected development occurs. As the town grows and new residents need and expect new or upgraded community services and facilities, the town will need enough revenue to provide the services and facilities outlined herein.

### *Public Safety*

Public Safety has increasingly become a concern in Townsend. At this time, police protection is provided through the Delaware State Police. Additional extra duty patrols are purchased to support in town patrols. Future funding has been the main deterrent to establishing a police force. The Finance Committee should continue to collect information about alternatives to increase revenue to fund a police department, other than through property-tax increases.

Townsend Fire Company provides fire and emergency medical service (EMS) to the town and has over 164 registered members, including 19 trained EMTs, 30 active firefighters, and 90 administrative and honorary members. The fire company was founded in 1927 and has a long history of activity in the town, including carnivals and the provision of banquet hall facilities in addition to fire services. A new fire station was completed on Main Street in the

spring of 2002. Most responses are the responsibility of volunteers, although there are now several paid firemen who help respond to calls between the hours of 5 a.m. and 4 p.m. An additional ambulance and a quick response vehicle have been added to the fleet, creating a total of three available EMS vehicles.

In 2006 the Town established a fire company impact fee to be assessed on all new construction within the town limits and future annexation areas. This impact fee of \$750 per unit is held in an escrow fund, and a donation is made yearly to the fire company for capital improvements in order to better serve the residents of Townsend.

### Public Safety Critical Issues & Future Needs

#### *Crime*

Residents are concerned about increasing crime as a potential impact of the expected development of areas recently annexed into town. Currently police service is largely complaint-driven, and this critical service could be inadequate as the town continues to grow. With the rapid population growth, there are concerns about an associated increase in public safety problems. Crime has escalated within the town limits and needs to be addressed immediately.

#### *Volunteer Fire and EMS*

The Townsend Volunteer Fire Company is beginning to experience recruiting problems. As older members retire and the area develops (increasing the needs), staffing the fire and ambulance services may become a critical issue for the town. Adding to this problem is the lack of workforce housing in Townsend, which is forcing volunteers to live further away from the fire station. This decreases the number of trained volunteers who live close enough to be able to respond to emergencies and creates a limited base of responders who are available nights and weekends.

### Public Safety Goal

Coordinate with the Townsend Volunteer Fire Company, the Delaware State Police, Middletown Police, New Castle County Police, and DelDOT to provide adequate police, fire, and emergency medical services to the town.

### Public Safety Recommendations

- Continue to provide money and assistance to the Townsend Volunteer Fire Company as it expands to meet the needs of a growing town through impact fees on new-home construction and other sources.
- Investigate the public safety needs of Townsend, and the potential need to establish a regional/municipal police force.

- Work with New Castle County and the State to ensure adequate emergency medical services for the community and the region.

*Educational Services*

Townsend is located in the Appoquinimink School District, which serves most of the area of New Castle County below the C&D Canal as well as some areas above the canal. As shown in Table 14, Townsend pre-K and kindergarten children attend the newest school in the district, the 26,000-square-foot Townsend Early Childhood Center. The school opened in the fall of 2008 and provides 15 classrooms to serve pre-K and kindergarten students. Children in grades one through five attend the Townsend Elementary School located on Main Street, grades six to eight attend the Everett Meredith Middle School in Middletown. Due to the remodeling of Everett Meredith Middle School, Townsend students in grades 6-8 will attend Fairview Campus until Everett Middle reopens in the Fall of 2022. Grades nine to twelve had attended Middletown High School in Middletown. Beginning Fall of 2020, Townsend high school students (grades 9-12) will attend the brand-new Odessa High School.

Table 14: Educational Facilities

School Name	Location	Date Built/ Renovated	Enrollment (2019)	State Proficient Ratings 2019 ELA 52.7% Mathematics 42.1%
Townsend Early Childhood Center	Townsend	Fall 2008	242	NA
Townsend Elementary	Townsend	1932/2014	443	ELA 64.8% Mathematics 54.87%
Everett Meredith Middle School	Middletown	1928/2002 (Closed 2020/2021, Reopening Fall 2022)	927	ELA 58.2% Mathematics 32.87%
Middletown High School	Middletown	1997/2002	1,776	ELA 60.7% Mathematics 34.49%
Odessa High School	Townsend	2020	NA	NA

Source: DOE Report Card

In addition to public school facilities, there is a private early childhood education center and several private day care centers in Townsend. The Town should work with YMCA of Delaware, and other youth organizations to provide summer camps and educational opportunities for children.

Education Critical Issues and Future Needs

*Educational Facilities*

Residents are concerned about crowding, usage, and the condition of the community’s schools as development continues in the areas recently annexed into town. The Appoquinimink School

District has been under immense growth pressure as a result of recent development in the Bear/Glasgow and M-O-T regions. As Townsend continues to grow, the corresponding population of school-aged children will also grow, requiring additional classroom space. Townsend Elementary was recently remodeled in 2014 to continue to meet the needs of the residents of the town. Additionally, the existing school has been a cultural and community asset that the town and a Spanish immersion program has been implemented at the Learning Center as well as the Elementary school.

### Education Goal

Continue to provide adequate educational facilities to meet the needs of current and future residents while preserving the community character of Townsend Elementary. The Town should continue to work with the staff of Townsend Elementary to provide community support for parents and students to become responsible, self-disciplined, contributing community members.

### Education Recommendations

- Promote the continued role of the Townsend Elementary School as a community education, recreation, and cultural resource while developing and growing the partnership between the elementary school and the early-childhood center.
- Continue to encourage childcare providers to locate in Townsend.
- Continue to promote educational activities (e.g., summer camps), at the Municipal Park through partnerships with local nonprofits such as YMCA of Delaware.
- Develop safe walkways for children to cross the railroad tracks to walk to Learning Center and Elementary school and to bus stops.

### *Post-Secondary Education*

The closest post-secondary educational facilities to Townsend are in Dover, New Castle and Newark. Dover and New Castle is home to Wilmington University, Dover also hosts Delaware Technical College, and Delaware State University. Newark is home to the University of Delaware. Cecil County Community College is located nearby in Elkton, Maryland.

### *Library*

The Town should continue to support the provision of adequate library services for the M-O-T region. Currently, the Appoquinimink Library, part of the Delaware system of Department of Libraries, is located on N Broad Street and in Middletown and provides public access to the library and seasonal educational programs for adults and children. A new library is anticipated to be built on a vacant property on Route 299 (East Main St.) and Catherine St. north of Silver Lake Elementary. The Corbit-Calloway Memorial Library in Odessa is a

contract library to the New Castle County Department of Libraries and is available for community use.

The Town is also introducing the Little Free Library program within the community. Three book boxes will be installed with one being located at the Town Hall, one in Townsend Village I and another in Townsend Village II West. It is hoped that this program will be expanded throughout town.

### *Health Care*

Most town residents drive to Middletown to obtain health care, and even further depending on the severity of the problem. The Middletown Health Unit is located on North Broad Street in Middletown and is run by the Delaware Department of Health and Social Services' Division of Public Health. It provides dental care for Medicaid-eligible children, cancer screening, a prenatal clinic, post-partum and family-planning clinics, mental health, hygiene, pediatrics, and geriatric screening. The Bayhealth Outpatient Center is located on Main Street in Middletown and specializes in cardiology, cancer care, family medicine, general surgery, mental health, obstetrics/gynecology, and pediatrics. The Christiana Care Health System/Nemours operates a Family Health Care Center on Cleaver Farm Road in Middletown. On the west side of Middletown, Christiana Care Medical Center offers diagnostics such as MRI, X-ray, ultrasound, CAT-scan, as well as physical therapy and specialist doctor services. Christiana Care Primary Care is located on the east side of Middletown that serves as an emergency unit on the lower level. Encompass Health Rehab is also located on the east side of Middletown.

The closest acute care hospital is Christiana Hospital, located about 25 miles north of Townsend near Christiana, or Kent General Hospital, a Bayhealth Medical Center, located about 25 miles south in Dover.

### Healthcare Recommendation

- Encourage professional healthcare services to locate within Townsend with the long-range planning of a commercial district on Summit Bridge Road.

### Postal Service

There is currently a post office on Main Street that services the town Monday through Saturday and has the zip code 19734. Mail delivery is split. The old town area of Townsend is serviced by a rural route system that provides for mail delivery via postal box. While the developments of TV1 and 2 as well as Townsend Station have their mail distributed via letter carriers from Middletown.

## Solid-Waste Disposal

Trash removal and recycling is a basic service that residents expect and rely on when living in a town. Residents are required to use the town's contracted trash provider. Townsend contracts to the qualified bidder for trash removal and recyclables collection services. Commercial businesses in town are required to contract for garbage services individually.

Yard waste such as grass clippings, leaves, brush, and shrubs can be recycled into mulch or compost and be reused. Although the town is not legally obligated to recycle yard waste, the town should encourage recycling by providing information to residents about their recycling options. Pine Tree Station, located outside of Townsend on Pine Tree Road, can accept yard waste. More information can be found at <https://dnrec.alpha.delaware.gov/waste-hazardous/yard-waste/drop-off-sites/>.

## Solid-Waste Recommendations

- Continue to provide trash removal and recycling service at the most affordable rate by providing the contract to the lowest qualified bidder.
- Encourage residents to participate in the recycling program and educate residents about allowable recyclables.
- Explore yard waste collection at various times throughout the year to improve upon cost effective services at Pine Tree Transfer Station.
- Encourage residents to compost their yard waste or take it to Pine Tree Transfer Station for recycling.

## Electricity

At this time, Delmarva Power provides electricity throughout the town with no oversight by Townsend.

## Gas

Chesapeake Utilities Corporation was granted a franchise to provide natural gas to the town with no oversight by Townsend.

## Cable

Atlantic Broadband and Verizon Delaware, Inc., approved to provide cable services to the town with no oversight by Townsend.

## State Service Center

The Division of State Service Centers of the Delaware Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS) operates a network of 14 state service centers across the state. These centers offer a wide range of public and not-for-profit services to help with health and human service needs. The center closest to Townsend is the Appoquinimink State Service Center located at 122 Silver Lake Road in Middletown. This center offers client services administered by DHSS divisions including the Division of State Service Centers, the Division of Social Services, and the Division of Public Health. The Delaware Department of Labor's Division of Vocational Rehabilitation also has an office at this location. For more information, go to [www.dhss.delaware.gov/dhss/main/maps/dsscmap/appoquin.htm](http://www.dhss.delaware.gov/dhss/main/maps/dsscmap/appoquin.htm)

## Parks, Recreation, and Open Space

Parks, passive open spaces, natural areas, and preserved agricultural lands help define the community, provide for recreational pursuits, ensure the continued viability of agriculture, and promote the well-being of the community's residents. Townsend has indicated that preserving and enhancing the town's social, cultural, aesthetic, and environmental amenities is an important goal. Zoning codes require that at least 10 percent of all available land in a new residential development be dedicated as open space for passive or active recreation and at least 50 percent of the open space must be suitable for active recreation.

### *New Castle County—Townsend Park*

The New Castle County—Townsend Park is located on the south end of town, just outside the town's boundary and is administered by the county. This small and well-used park includes playground equipment, picnic tables, and a BBQ grill.

### *New Castle County Regional Park*

A New Castle County Regional Park is in the master plan for the Southern New Castle County Land Acquisition and Development Plan to be built two miles north of town adjacent to Wiggins Mill Pond. The park was originally to be constructed in 2003, but construction has not commenced. The Town should continue to work with New Castle County to initiate construction. The park will eventually be a district park and recreational facility that will complement the Townsend Municipal Park. There is a need for a trail network to connect this park with Townsend Municipal Park and the Charles Price Park in Middletown. Other recreation providers in the area include the Middletown Senior Center, M-O-T Little League, football and soccer leagues, Boys & Girls Clubs, Girl and Boy Scouts, and 4-H.

### *Townsend Municipal Park*

The Townsend Municipal Park is an 11.5-acre, deed-restricted property that is located on Edgar Road in Townsend Village I. In early November 2007, the mayor and council held a groundbreaking ceremony on this municipal park property. The Town worked with DNREC

and the Appoquinimink River Association to design the park in an environmentally responsible manner with native landscaping and a state-of-the-art stormwater-management system.

### *Future Use*

There is a desire from the Town to work with groups, such as the YMCA of Delaware, and the M-O-T Senior Center to provide programs for the future center. The park was designed to include ball fields, basketball courts, a skate park, and other multi-purpose active recreation areas. The Town should investigate the potential for constructing additional walking and jogging paths, a public swimming pool or splash pad, bicycle path, community gardens, and hiking trails in adjoining open spaces.

### *Greenbelt, TDR, and Agriculture-Preservation Areas*

In order to preserve the rural character in and around Townsend and help reduce conflict between urban and rural uses, the Town has indicated areas to the south, west, and north of the town to be preserved as a greenbelt and act as a buffer between Townsend and Middletown. These greenbelt areas serve as potential sending zones for a Transfer of Development Rights Program. This program should be jointly developed either as a “stand-alone municipal program” or as a joint effort with New Castle County and the state of Delaware. The greenbelt areas are detailed on Map 5 the Appendix.

Property owners located in the area identified as the future greenbelt should be encouraged to participate in the Delaware Agricultural Lands Preservation Foundation that partner with the Delaware Department of Agriculture and New Castle County. This program provides landowners the opportunity to enter into an Agricultural Preservation District, which provides tax relief in exchange for limits on development for ten years, or an Agricultural Conservation Easement that permanently preserves the land by purchasing the development rights. Within the greenbelt there are property owners who are currently participating in the New Castle County permanent preservation program (175 acres), Delaware Department of Agriculture easement program (122 acres), and the Delaware Department of Agriculture preservation districts (10 acres). New Castle County owns a 194-acre park in the greenbelt.

New Castle County has incorporated a Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) program into the county Unified Development Code, allowing development rights to be transferred from one area to another. Rights in a “sending” area are bought by a developer and used in a “receiving” area to intensify development. This allows the owner of the “sending” areas to be compensated and still preserve open space. Townsend’s future greenbelt will be identified as a sending area for development rights and an area of medium density along SR 71 in the north of town will be a receiving area. (See Map 5: Townsend Growth & Annexation Future Land Use Map).

### *Connectivity*

As a participant in the Safe Routes to School Program, DelDOT helped fund the streetscape project that installed sidewalk compliant with Americans with Disabilities Act requirements and

ample lighting. The Town should continue to connect the system of parks, trails, and greenways through town.

As the town acquires more open spaces and parks with the development of new subdivision and annexation areas, the interconnected network of trails, walkways, and shared pathways should continue to be a priority when designating open space. Main Street, the historic section of town, the new sub-divisions, the new municipal park, The Woods At Hidden Creek, and the Townsend elementary school are all priorities for walking trails that promote interconnectivity.

### Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Critical Issues & Future Needs

#### *Local Parks*

Located in Townsend Village I, Townsend Municipal Park has sufficient space for open space for a community center to provide recreational activities in town. Additional parkland or open space should be secured in the old section of town as well as in the new subdivisions. The U.S. Census data show a high percentage of children living in Townsend, and residents would like to see more places and activities for children.

#### *Connectivity and Walkability*

Increased development surrounding the old town has created a disjointed town that cannot be easily maneuvered on foot. The Town needs to continue to create a network of walking trails and paths throughout town to connect the various sections. The Town should plan for funding for purchasing and maintaining these trails. In particular, the new municipal park should be connected to the original section of town through a safe path near the southeast corner of the parcel.

#### *Regional Greenway*

The northernmost boundary of the town, currently at Townsend Village I, has the potential to serve as a link in a regional greenway, connecting Townsend Municipal Park to Wiggins Mill Pond, New Castle County Park and beyond. The Regional Greenway would serve as a pedestrian or bicycle path to connect the open spaces in the M-O-T area. Much of this land is protected from development either through floodplain regulations or existing parks and open space.

#### *Wildlife Preservation*

Residents have expressed concern about the potential loss of wildlife as agricultural and wooded areas are developed in homes and commercial structures. The parks should use sustainable management practices such as stormwater management and the use of Delaware native species whenever possible. Concentrating development on newly developed parcels, linking open space and preserved areas, and participation in the Community Wildlife Habitat Program will maximize the area available for wildlife.

### *Open-Space Preservation*

The continued effort to preserve open space in town and in future annexation areas is important. The Town should continue to enforce the open-space regulations in new subdivisions, promote the use of agricultural districts and easements, streamline and promote the Transfer of Development Rights program, and allow denser development in appropriate areas.

### *Zoning*

The Town has designated a zoning classification of “Preservation,” which can be used to identify land that might be suitable as part of a local-park system. The Town may want to revise the ordinance to allow certain public uses such as a library, or community/recreation center. Although the Townsend Municipal Park is deed-restricted, the Town might want to rezone the property to Preservation. The Town needs to amend its zoning code to allow for agricultural and/or agribusiness uses that are compatible with current or future land uses and specify uses in the future greenbelt.

### Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Goal

Promote a connected system of open space to provide passive and active areas for recreation and preserve the town’s natural wildlife habitat and aesthetic resources. This goal will require coordination with New Castle County.

### Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Recommendations

- Update the Unified Development Code to allow higher-density development on newly developing lands to maximize land preserved as open space.
- Review current lands zoned “Preservation” and consider rezoning other open space areas in town as “Preservation.”
- Have Town explore acquiring and utilizing space to allow structures such as a community center, library, or recreational equipment.
- Consider updating the Unified Development Code to include an agricultural and/or agribusiness zoning designation that allows agricultural activities, including livestock, and low-density development (about one dwelling unit/five acres) within the greenbelt in the town.
- Coordinate with Middletown to protect areas identified by both towns as greenbelt.
- Work with Delaware Agricultural Lands Preservation Foundation, Delaware Department of Agriculture, and New Castle County to encourage landowner participation in preservation districts and easements.

- Work with New Castle County to participate in the Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) program and designate sending and receiving areas in town.
- Continue to participate in the Community Wildlife Habitat Certification Project and encourage homeowners to complete the application for certification.
- Secure an easement near the southeast corner of the municipal park to provide safe access to the park from the center of town.
- Study maintenance and liability issues, arrangements, and costs for new local parks or open space.
- Locate future parks, both active and passive, to be accessible to all town residents and linked to other parks to provide corridors for recreation and wildlife.
- Work with New Castle County, Middletown, Delaware Greenways, DNREC, and others to establish a greenway/bikeway between Noxontown Pond and Wiggins Mill Pond with a connection to Townsend.
- To address connectivity of the Townsend Municipal Park with the historic section of town, Townsend should encourage private-property owners on Chestnut Street to allow public access through private property to access the park. Private-property owners are protected from liability according to Delaware Code Title 7 Chapter 59 “Public Recreation on Private Lands.”
- Improve landscaping and add boardwalks where necessary to protect wetlands and environmentally sensitive areas along trails and greenways.
- Support New Castle County efforts to develop a regional park facility adjacent to Wiggins Mill pond as part of the Southern New Castle County Land Acquisition and Development plan.

#### *Other Community Needs and Services*

Community meeting and banquet space is an important aspect of solidifying the community. Available space is located at the Townsend Fire Hall, the Fellowship Hall of Immanuel United Methodist Church, and the Townsend Elementary School. To meet the needs of the town, it is necessary to increase the amount of meeting space in town by securing a community center with Town and developing a commercial district along Route 71 for potential development.

#### Other Community Needs and Services Recommendation

- Continue the relationship with the M-O-T Senior Center to provide recreational opportunities for the elderly population in Townsend.
- Research the need and location for a community center.

- Townsend community outreach program and partner with local churches, non-profits and youth group to assist with residential services for the betterment of the community.

## 2-3. Water and Wastewater

*GOAL: Provide adequate and efficient public facilities, utilities, and services to meet the needs of present and future residents.*

The provision of drinking water and wastewater-disposal services are two elements that are vital to the public health of a community. This section of the plan reviews the condition of these services in Townsend and recommends action to improve the long-term provision of these services.

### 2-3a. Public Water Supply

Currently an investor-owned water supplier, the Artesian Water Company (Townsend Water), supplies drinking water to the town. Artesian provides potable water to residents and businesses to satisfy their daily needs and provides a reliable source of water to combat fires. Public water systems are highly regulated by federal and state statutes and are continually monitored for water pressure and quality. Due to significant growth in the past five years, Artesian has prepared a five-year plan to upgrade the water system in order to provide the highest quality service to the town. Once completed, the company has assured the town it will have adequate supply to meet new demands. Artesian Water Company maintains Lattamus Street pump station that utilizes an underground storage tank on Railroad Avenue. As part of the five-year plan to upgrade the town water system, Artesian has added an additional pump station to help increase water delivery. Artesian utilizes two “Class A” wells located in the original section of town that draw water from the Rancocas Group Aquifer to provide drinking water to the system. These wells are protected by the Source Water Protection Ordinance specified in the Unified Development Code. The wells are designated as “low vulnerability” because they withdraw water from a confined aquifer that has significant clay layers between the ground surface and the well-intake screen.

Due to the geology of the confined aquifer, the wells have a low susceptibility to most contaminants which is fortunate for the town because the wells are located in a section of town that was developed before the Source Water Protection Ordinances were enacted. Townsend has adopted an ordinance that requires all new construction and annexations to be connected to the municipal water system. No additional permits for the installation of private wells will be issued. However, residences that already had private wells in use before July 2, 1991, are exempt from the mandatory connection to the municipal water supply until the wells become inoperable. Table 15 provides basic information on the town’s wells.

Table 15: Well Information for Artesian Water Company (Townsend Water)

Well Number	Permit Number	Year Constructed	Well Capacity (gpm)	Well Diameter (inches)	Screen Interval (fbgs)	Aquifer
Townsend Water 2R	187348	2002	200	8	95-125	Rancocas Group
Townsend Water 1	30148	1973	225	8	86-155	Rancocas Group

Source: Public Water Supply Source Water Assessment for Artesian Water Company (Townsend Water), October 2003

Public Water Supply Recommendations

- Coordinate with New Castle County and Artesian Water to ensure the timely implementation of the five-year plan to upgrade to provide adequate water services for present and future residents.
- Encourage homes nearest to town to be built first.
- Discourage development within the Source Water Protection areas.

2-3b. Wastewater

New Castle County provides wastewater service to Townsend through a sewer agreement negotiated in 2001 that extends until the year 2025. The county provides sewer service through infrastructure and a sewer easement located along Wiggins Mill Road that connects to a wastewater-treatment and -disposal facility known as Water Farm #1, located southeast of Odessa. Wastewater is treated by a sequencing- batch-reactor system, and treated effluent is either discharged to the Appoquinimink River or used for spray irrigation.

The sewer agreement between Townsend and the county covers all existing residences in town and subdivisions to include: Townsend Villages I & II, Townsend Station, and The Woods at Hidden Creek. 24 infill dwelling units, and 45,000-square-foot (23,000 gallons per day) of commercial development. In return, Townsend agreed to improve environmental protections and give the county the right to refuse any annexation or industrial use.

As a result of the sewer agreement between Townsend and New Castle County, commercial uses within town are limited until 2025 to 45,000 square feet (23,000 gallons per day). Additionally, any new industrial use is subject to both New Castle County Council and County Executive approval. These conditions have the potential to limit otherwise appropriate development. Several commercial and institutional uses have been added since the agreement that do not count towards the sewer quota for new commercial development. A Walgreen’s drug store relies on a septic system, and the Townsend Early Childhood Center adjacent to Townsend Elementary that was built by Appoquinimink School District does not count towards the quota because it is a regional community use.

When The Woods At Hidden Creek is developed to the highest density allowed by current zoning, there is the potential to construct about 222 additional dwelling units.

### Wastewater Critical Issues & Future Needs

#### *Development Phasing*

The town appears to have more residential building capacity than sewer capacity in the long term. As new development occurs, it will be important to develop the areas closest to the existing town infrastructure first. This will ensure that the town grows in an orderly fashion and is not stuck later waiting for sewer capacity to fill a gap in the middle of town.

#### *Growth Potential*

In order for the town to grow, sewer capacity needs to increase. Townsend has continued to grow and plans to annex additional properties for a greenbelt and for residential and mixed-use development but can only do so if sewer capacity is increased. Townsend is located in an area experiencing substantial residential growth, and the town should be able to maximize development capacity surrounding already developed areas without strict limitations on sewer capacity.

#### *County Investment in Sewer Infrastructure*

Under the current agreement, New Castle County is obligated to provide improvements in sewer infrastructure that will result in sewer capacity for 800 additional residences, 45,000 square feet of commercial development, and 24 infill units (since 2001). Townsend should coordinate with the county to ensure the upgrades to infrastructure are completed in accordance with the rate of development in The Woods At Hidden Creek and any new annexations.

#### *Cost of Connections*

Some residents are still utilizing septic systems and are required to hook up to the county sewer system when these systems fail. However, the cost incurred to the homeowner to connect to the county sewer system can be extremely high. According to the sewer agreement, all annexed properties should be connected to the county sewer, but the high cost to the homeowner has prohibited this from occurring. In some cases, sewer lines were 150 feet short of reaching residences, and homeowner costs could reach up to \$10,000.

### Wastewater Goal

Provide additional sewer capacity for Townsend for both commercial and residential use in accordance with State Investment Strategies and the Southern New Castle County Memorandum of Agreement Local Area Plan for the M-O-T region. The town wishes to renegotiate its current sewer agreement with the county soon, in order to allow purchase of additional sewer services from Middletown.

## Wastewater Recommendations

- Continue to negotiate with New Castle County to increase the sewer capacity stated in the agreement to allow growth in areas that are in accordance with the State Investment Strategies and the SNCC Memorandum of Agreement Local Area Plan for the M-O-T region.
- Continue communication with New Castle County regarding the sewer agreement.
- Investigate the possibility of connecting to Middletown and Smyrna Municipal Wastewater Treatment System to increase sewer capacity.
- Investigate the possibility of Townsend building its own municipal wastewater-treatment facility.
- The town should work with the county and nonprofits to secure funding to make connecting to the county sewer more affordable for residents.
- Encourage homes to be built nearest to town first.

### 2-3c. Stormwater

Stormwater is the water that accumulates during precipitation events and travels across impervious surfaces. As development increases, the amount of impervious surface increases, which leads to more stormwater runoff flowing across the ground surface. Runoff has the potential to transport pollution such as oil, gas, pet waste, fertilizers, sediment, and other pollutants that collect on roadways and gutters into the drainage systems and eventually into streams, ponds, and rivers. Preventing pollution from stormwater runoff is addressed through stormwater-management ordinances, environmental regulations, and smart land use decisions.

New development projects are required to submit a stormwater-management plan that addresses stormwater issues and indicates the methods of stormwater management. In addition to plan submittal, inspection during and after construction and education about stormwater best management practices is required. Methods of stormwater management include structural and vegetative mechanisms, both of which control the quantity and quality of water that reaches waterways, such as stormwater-management ponds, rain gardens, riparian buffers and storm sewers. All stormwater-management plans shall be developed in accordance with the state of Delaware Sediment and Stormwater Regulations and be approved by the town engineer

Townsend has adopted ordinances in accordance with Source Water Assessment and Protection Plan that specifies land uses in water resource protection areas (WRPA). WRPA areas include Class A Wellhead Protection Areas and Excellent Water Recharge Areas that are shown on Map 3 in the Appendix. This ordinance is described in the natural-resources section in more detail but generally restricts the amount of impervious cover allowed in WRPAs and requires all new buildings to drain stormwater from roofs into underground recharge systems. The

underground recharge systems greatly reduce the velocity of runoff and opportunities for contamination.

Although Townsend is progressive in the implementation of green best management practices and stormwater-retention and -detention ponds in new development, stormwater quantity and quality management in the historic town core and industrial areas still need to be addressed. Currently, these areas have no stormwater-management systems, and rainwater and pollutants are free to enter streams and wetlands via runoff, creating the potential for unintended environmental impacts. Residents have indicated that standing water has collected in the streets and in basements after a rainfall. To address these issues, Townsend should begin to retrofit the historic section of town to improve stormwater management. This issue will become even more prominent if the town grows to the extent that one of the state-maintained roads needs to be widened or otherwise upgraded. If this occurs, the state will be required to upgrade the stormwater-management system in that corridor, with potentially devastating effects on the town's historic and aesthetic resources if a stormwater-management facility were inappropriately located. In addition to this, the Town should assess the age of the stormwater infrastructure. Old and aging pipes have the potential for catastrophic failure causing roads and sidewalks to sinkhole. Funds to assess stormwater infrastructure for old town should be state function as it is their roadways and right of way.

As the Town continues to develop with increased impervious cover, it is likely permit coverage will be required under the Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) program. This permit is for the discharge of stormwater from/through the municipal separate storm sewer system to surface waters of the State. The Town should plan for future permit coverage and retain staff that can administer the permit. May not be feasible at this time but should be addressed to council for future budgets.

### Stormwater Management Goal

Provide all areas of the town with adequate facilities for removal of stormwater in order to reduce pollutant and sediment loading in local streams and rivers and control excess stormwater that collects during rain events while preserving Townsend's small-town character.

### Stormwater Management Recommendations

- Work with New Castle County Conservation District and DNREC to provide assistance with stormwater issues and implementation of green-technology best management practices that could be used to reduce pollutants entering the Appoquinimink River and Blackbird Creek.
- Provide homeowners with education and training about best management practices for stormwater in residential areas. Pamphlets, educational materials and flyers will be developed and distributed by the Town.

- Require the town engineer to review the town for stormwater-management issues, especially those related to industrial land uses and street upgrades. This information should be used to identify and preserve appropriate land for stormwater-management facilities in anticipation of the need.
- Adopt those parts of the 2019 stormwater management regulations that are compatible with Townsend's small-town character.
- In the past, the town received funding for drainage projects on Taylor Street to mitigate water collecting in residents' basements. The town should attempt to secure funding to address similar drainage issues on Faulk Road and Chestnut Road.
- The town should continue to locate funding to improve drainage condition by retrofitting stormwater management techniques in the historic and industrial sections of town.

## 2-4. Natural Resources

*GOAL: Preserve and enhance the town's social, cultural, aesthetic, and environmental amenities.*

Natural resources are an important part of Townsend. Measures the town has taken to proactively preserve the natural environment are described in this section. Open space and natural areas in town are vital for maintaining the town's character and protecting the drinking water supply. This section provides an inventory of the environmental features present in town and describes programs and policies that can address these concerns and protect the town's natural resources.

### 2-4a. Physical Characteristics

Townsend is located in southern New Castle County, Delaware, within the interior lowlands portion of the Atlantic Coastal Plain. The topography is characterized by elevations at about 60 to 70 feet above sea level throughout most of town, decreasing to an elevation of 10 feet in the northwest portion of town near Wiggins Mill Pond.

#### *Wetlands*

Wetlands protect water quality by naturally filtering runoff, providing wildlife habitat, and providing protection from flooding. Wetlands are generally categorized by having hydrophytic vegetation (plants suited to wet soils), hydric soils (soils that are seasonally or permanently saturated), and a hydrologic connection (a connection to either groundwater or surface water). Protection of both non-tidal and tidal wetlands falls under the regulatory jurisdiction of Section 404 provisions of the Federal Clean Water Act. The regulatory authorities for development or disturbance in and around wetlands are the Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control, U.S. Army Corp of Engineers, and the Environmental Protection Agency.

Wooded wetland areas exist along the Appoquinimink River and Wiggins Mill Pond in Townsend Village I, Townsend Village II, and on The Woods At Hidden Creek. In the northern part of Townsend Villages, there is an existing wooded area that is delineated as non-tidal wetlands. In Townsend Village II, a section of woods runs along the eastern side of the development and is also indicated as a non-tidal wetland area.

A small piece of property north of Gray Street in Townsend Village II is designated as a wetlands area. Since 1992 the Delaware Wildlife Species Conservation & Research Program, has been monitoring the area for changes in the bog turtle population. The program continues to study and determine the impacts of new development on the habitat of the turtle. The Woods At Hidden Creek, located in the southwest quadrant of town, has significant non-tidal wetlands, which need to be considered before development occurs. Future development should avoid isolating and/or disconnecting contiguous wetland tracts. Additional wetlands interspersed throughout town can be identified on the Environmental Features map in the Appendix.

#### *Forested Areas*

Townsend has a significant amount of forested land within the town boundary with stands of mature forests located in Townsend Village I, Townsend Village II, and on The Woods At Hidden Creek. The town should actively promote the protection of this valuable resource by continuing to prohibit clearing of forests and require reforestation of open space with appropriate plants listed in Section 1116 of the town's UDO. In addition, the town can work to promote the development and maintenance of forested areas through participation in the Urban and Community Forestry Program. This program is administered by the Delaware Forest Service within the Department of Agriculture and offers grants and technical assistance to communities for tree-planting, care and management projects on publicly owned lands, such as parks, open space and along streets. Information can be found at <https://delawaretrees.com/programs-and-services/urban-grant-program/>.

#### *Open Space and Agricultural Preservation Areas*

Open space in town is not only used to preserve rural character and provide outdoor recreation, it also provides important habitat and ecological benefits for wildlife. Townsend has been able to counteract some of the negative effects of development on wildlife habitat and natural ecosystems through zoning regulations that mandate a requirement of at least ten percent open space in new developments, programs that encourage using native plants, and reforestation requirements. The town is also making environmentally responsible choices in Townsend Municipal Park by planting Delaware native species and implementing stormwater best management practices.

The area surrounding Townsend is a proposed greenbelt and has agricultural easements and agricultural preservation districts in state and county programs. Agricultural landowners will be encouraged to participate in these programs that restrict development on prime agricultural land and to participate in a Transfer of Development Rights program after the sending and

receiving areas are identified. A new agricultural-zoning category should be considered for the town's Zoning and Unified Development Code that would allow agricultural activities within the town boundary and permit one dwelling unit per five acres in the greenbelt. Farmland preservation is important because it not only protects food supply and open space but has the added benefit of protecting natural habitats.

### *Floodplains and Flooding*

Floodplains occur naturally along water bodies and are the areas where increased stream flows are accommodated during storm events. While every flood event will have a unique flood plain based on the amount of rainfall received, the 100-year flood plain is accepted as the "regulatory" limit of flooding for flood insurance purposes and for zoning and development practices in Townsend. Land that is designated as a 100-year flood plain has a one percent (1/100) chance of a flood occurring each year. Occasionally the Federal Emergency Management Agency evaluates precipitation records and associated flooding events to assess the flood plain boundaries. As the climate changes, Delaware is projected to have more frequent high intensity precipitation events, which may cause more pervasive and extensive flooding. Floodplain boundaries can be viewed online:

<https://maps.dnrec.delaware.gov/FloodPlanning/default.html>.

The maintenance and protection of Townsend's floodplain is important to minimize property damage during storm events and maintain the natural filtration of stormwater runoff on its way to water bodies. Residential development is prohibited in the 100-year flood plain in Townsend. As the construction of Townsend Village I is completed, the flood plain and riparian buffer areas are intended to be deeded to the Town for permanent protection. The site location is in the upper tip of the Townsend Village 1 development and is preserved as park land along the Wiggins Mill Pond

### *Watersheds*

Wiggins Mill Pond and the Appoquinimink River serve as the municipal boundary of Townsend to the north. The Appoquinimink River continues to flow in a northeasterly direction toward Noxontown Pond and eventually into the Delaware Bay. This area in the north of town near the pond and the river is the area with the greatest change in elevation at the point where the flood plain gently slopes to converge at the water's edge. Non-tidal wetlands and wooded areas act as a riparian buffer and run along the border of Wiggins Mill Pond and the Appoquinimink River, with a few areas in the 100-year flood plain.

A watershed is all of the land that water moves across or under while flowing to a specific body of water and includes the plants, animals, and humans in this area. Townsend is located in the Appoquinimink River Watershed in the north and the Blackbird Creek Watershed in the southern part of town. The Appoquinimink River watershed drains approximately 47 square miles in New Castle County and consists of three main branches, including the main branch of the Appoquinimink River (Wiggins Mill Pond and Noxontown Pond), Deep Creek (Silver Lake), and Drawyer Creek (Shallcross Lake). The ponds and lakes included in the

Appoquinimink River watershed are typically shallow, man-made, and maintained by dams. The Appoquinimink watershed empties into the Delaware Bay, where expansive tidal wetlands are part of one of the largest undisturbed marsh systems in Delaware. These wetlands serve as important habitat for wildlife and waterfowl, spawning grounds for fish and other aquatic species, and passive recreation for local birdwatchers. This ecologically diverse watershed is home to many species of wildlife, including the bald eagle and bog turtle. Hawks, herons, egrets, kingfishers, osprey, swallows, otters, minks, beavers, deer, flying squirrels, meadow jumping mice, bats, and possums also inhabit the area.

A small portion of the southern part of Townsend is in the Blackbird Creek watershed. This watershed flows northeast into the Delaware Bay and is one of the most pristine watersheds in Delaware. It is primarily used for agriculture and very low-density housing. Much of this watershed is protected, including a large forested area in Blackbird State Forest. The Delaware National Estuarine Research Reserve protects many of the salt marshes that are located where Blackbird Creek meets the Delaware Bay.

#### *Water Resource Protection Areas*

Almost the entire original town and approximately half of Townsend Village I and II are designated as excellent water-recharge areas. Designation as an excellent-recharge area means that these regions have permeable soils that allow water from the surface to easily reach the water table. Wellhead-protection areas are the 300-foot-wide buffer surrounding the two Class A wellheads that are used for drinking water. The Town has adopted a Source Water Protection Ordinance in order to protect these vulnerable water resource protection areas. Protecting these areas is critical because they allow for the relatively rapid transmission of potential contaminants to drinking water sources. Measures aimed at protecting excellent-recharge areas include prohibiting the storage of hazardous materials within their boundaries and limiting impervious cover within these areas to best allow for the natural replenishment of aquifers.

#### *Riparian Buffers*

Riparian buffers are the vegetated lands adjacent to streams that help reduce erosion and prevent nutrient loading in streams. In Townsend, no vegetation can be removed, and existing native vegetation should be preserved in all riparian buffers. Townsend's codes 66-822 dictates that the riparian buffer areas. No septic systems are allowed, and any development occurring in this area should maximize drainage via natural swales, flow-through grassland, or discharged from a stormwater-management facility having a wetland or aquatic bench.

#### 2-4b. Relevant Programs, Policies, and Regulations

##### *Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL)*

The 1972 Federal Clean Water Act (CWA) was developed to maintain the health of our nation's waters. Under Section 303(d) of the CWA, states are required to identify all impaired waters and establish total maximum daily loads to restore their beneficial uses (e.g., swimming, fishing, drinking water, and shellfish harvesting). A TMDL defines the amount a

given pollutant may be discharged to a water body from all point, nonpoint, and natural background sources in order for that water body to meet or attain all applicable narrative and numerical water quality criterion (e.g., nutrient/bacteria concentrations, dissolved oxygen, and temperature) in the State of Delaware's Water Quality Standards. A TMDL may also include a reasonable margin of safety to account for uncertainties regarding the relationship between mass loading and resulting water quality.

In simplistic terms, a TMDL matches the strength, location, and timing of pollution sources within a watershed with the inherent ability of the receiving water to assimilate that pollutant without adverse impact. The realization of these TMDL pollutant load reductions will be through a Pollution Control Strategy (PCS). A PCS is the regulatory directive that identifies what specific actions (e.g., best management practices) are necessary for reducing pollutants in a given water body (or watershed); thus, realizing the water quality criterion or standards set forth in the State of Delaware's Water Quality Standards ultimately leading to the restoration of a given water body's (or watershed's) designated beneficial uses. The PCS will also include voluntary or non-regulatory components.

The Town of Townsend is located within two separate watersheds the Appoquinimink River and Blackbird Creek. Both watersheds have specific assigned nutrient (nitrogen and phosphorus) and bacterial TMDL load reduction rates. In the Appoquinimink River watershed, a 60 percent reduction is required in the nitrogen and phosphorus levels. Additionally, bacteria loading must be reduced by 8 percent in freshwater portions and 71 percent in tidal regions. In the Blackbird Creek watershed, a 40 percent reduction is required in the nitrogen and phosphorus levels and an 80 percent reduction is required for bacteria.

The Pollution Control Strategies for the Appoquinimink River and Blackbird Creek watersheds have not been completed or adopted by the state to date. In 2000, DNREC did create a tributary action team, comprised of local stakeholders and residents in the watershed, to make it possible for everyone to take part in the process of determining how to improve water quality and comply with TMDLs in the Appoquinimink. In 2004, this Appoquinimink action team was incorporated as a nonprofit organization the Appoquinimink River Association (ARA) has been disbanded.

#### *Source Water Assessment and Protection Program*

The Safe Drinking Water Act Amendments of 1996 mandated that each state develop a Source Water Assessment and Protection (SWAP) program to better protect public-drinking-water sources. There are three basic components of all SWAP programs:

- Delineate the boundaries of the land area most important to public water sources.
- Identify the potential sources of contamination within those boundaries.
- Assess the susceptibility of the public-water source to these contaminants.

In Delaware, the SWAP program was coordinated mainly by DNREC, which developed the majority of the assessments for all public water systems in Delaware, including Townsend. Since Artesian Water provides water service to Townsend, the assessment can be viewed under Artesian Water System Reports at [www.wr.udel.edu/swaphome/Publications/fa\\_artesian.html](http://www.wr.udel.edu/swaphome/Publications/fa_artesian.html).

In 2001, the Delaware General Assembly passed legislation which required all jurisdictions with a population greater than 2,000 to implement measures to protect sources of public drinking water within its boundaries by the year 2007. In 2007, the population of Townsend was less than 2,000. However, the town voluntarily adopted environmental-protection regulations that included source water protection ordinances. The relatively quick implementation of the environmental protection regulations in Townsend received regional attention. In 2002, the EPA awarded Townsend with a source water protection award for adopting a land use ordinance to protect its drinking water sources. The Townsend Source Water Protection Ordinance is a model for consideration by other towns.

#### *Critical Natural Areas and State Resource Areas*

A Critical Natural Area (CNA) is any site that is listed in the state natural areas inventory and has important or unusual natural significance. CNAs include forests, stream corridors, wetlands, nature preserves, and other natural areas. The Delaware Natural Areas Advisory Council designates which areas are CNAs, approves the mapping of these areas, and recommends areas for permanent protection through state acquisition. In New Castle County, 15 percent of the overall land area is designated as a CNA, and 64 percent of that acreage has already been protected. As described in section 1108 of Townsend's Unified Development Code, a CNA report is required before development can occur in an area designated by DNREC as a Critical Natural Area. There are no designated CNAs within the current town limits. However, there may be Critical Natural Areas located in potential annexation areas to the northeast of town surrounding the Appoquinimink River.

The 1990 Land Protection Act established the Open Space Program, which authorized the creation of State Resource Areas (SRA) maps and established the Open Space Council that approves SRA maps and recommends areas for permanent protection. SRA designation is given to parks, fish and wildlife areas, forests, nature preserves, and cultural sites. The 1990 Land Protection Act also authorizes SRAs to be utilized in the comprehensive planning process and targets areas for state land acquisition from willing sellers. The Woods At Hidden Creek, within the municipal boundaries of Townsend, has a densely wooded section that provides valuable habitat for wildlife and has been designated as an SRA.

SRAs, originally mapped in 1990, were updated in 2006 to include green-infrastructure target areas. The difference between SRAs and CNAs is that SRAs cover more overall acreage than do CNAs. Critical Natural Areas cover approximately 180,000 acres in Delaware, while SRAs cover almost 285,000 acres. The intent of the SRAs is to establish a system for identifying preservation-worthy open spaces that have not yet been preserved to guide acquisition

decisions and comprehensive land use planning. At the present time, counties and municipalities are highly encouraged to protect SRAs but are not required to do so. The maps were officially adopted by DNREC and transmitted to the counties in fall of 2006. However, due to the impact the SRA legislation has on property values, the program was litigated and is currently being redesigned.

#### *Community Wildlife Habitat (National Wildlife Federation)*

The town is a participant in the National Wildlife Federation's Community Wildlife Habitat Certification Project, which allows homeowners to apply for certification as a habitat for local animal species by adopting practices that are beneficial to wildlife. By adopting practices such as native landscaping, pesticide limitation, and limits on turf grass, residents can help mitigate the effects of development on wildlife and reduce residential nonpoint-source pollution. If 50 residents in town certify their backyards, the town would qualify for certification that would increase the availability of grants in Townsend. The Delaware Nature Society provides technical assistance to homeowners who are interested in certification, and the town has also received support from U.S. Senator Carper for its efforts.

In order to help obtain certification in the program, the town has partnered with Townsend Elementary to encourage environmental responsibility among the students. The Town has participated in two of the school's assemblies that explained ways to protect wildlife habitats. There is interest to revive the annual Main Street cleanup organized with the elementary school to pick up trash in town and along the banks of the creek.

#### *Preservation Zoning*

The Town has preserved a number of parcels through the use of a "Preservation" zoning classification. The town should consider zoning appropriate parts of the newly annexed lands, including floodplains, wetlands, and dedicated open space, as "Preservation" to protect environmental resources.

### Natural Resources Critical Issues and Future Needs

#### *Development Pressure*

With increased development in Townsend, it is important that the town continue to monitor environmental quality and proactively enact programs that protect natural resources. Increased development typically reduces natural habitats and increases impervious surfaces. Unless mitigated with sound environmental policies, development can lead to environmental degradation and additional nonpoint-source pollutants in surface waters.

#### *Sensitive Natural Areas*

Townsend has an extraordinary number of wetlands, excellent water recharge areas, and mature forest within its limits. It is essential that the town protect these important resources and continue to enforce environmental regulations in the town's Unified Development Code.

In particular, future developments should not fragment and/or isolate tracts of wetlands. Natural area corridors are critical to preserving the functionality of Townsend's natural resources.

#### Community Wildlife Habitat

Townsend is actively engaged with in the Community Wildlife Habitat program; however, the town needs to engaging residents within the new developments of Townsend Village I & Townsend Village II.

#### Natural Resources Goal

Preserve and enhance the town's aesthetic and environmental amenities through continual support of various environmental programs, environmental protection ordinances, responsible land use decisions, and coordination with environmental organizations.

#### Natural Resources Recommendations

- Continue to enforce environmental regulations (including Source Water Protection Ordinances) and adopt additional environmental protection measures as deemed necessary to protect water supplies and the health of the Appoquinimink River.
- Become more involved with conservation measures in the Blackbird Creek watershed to reach TMDL goals.
- Consider the adoption of a zoning category that allows agricultural and/or agribusiness uses within the town limits and one dwelling unit per five acres.
- Encourage participation in agricultural preservation programs and TDR programs.
- Continue to promote green space by protecting forested lands and requiring that a certain percentage of new subdivision be forested. Discourage clear-cutting and enforce reforestation projects when clear-cutting is necessary.
- Actively promote the development of forested areas through participation in the Urban and Community Forestry Program. This program is administered by the Delaware Forest Service within the Department of Agriculture and offers grants and technical assistance to communities for tree planting, care and management projects on publicly owned lands.
- Coordinate stormwater-management issues with the New Castle Conservation District and DNREC to ensure implementation of the Sediment and Stormwater Program. The town should work with the New Castle Conservation District to ensure that sediment and stormwater plan review becomes part of the town's planning process.

- Work with partners, such as DNREC’s Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program and the Institute for Public Administration’s Water Resources Agency to reduce nonpoint-source pollution through best management practices.
- Consider allowing poultry on residential property.
- Research the implementation of an energy conservation program in town that promotes energy efficient technology for town projects including street lighting.
- Adopt legislation that would protect identified SRAs once in town (via annexations).
- Continue to work towards community wildlife habitat certification by engaging residents within newer developments.
- Consider zoning appropriate areas in the town as Preservation to protect environmental resources.

## 2-5. Transportation

*GOAL: Manage future land uses and transportation systems to achieve efficient functioning of the town for the convenience and well-being of its residents, workers, and visitors.*

This section of the plan provides an inventory of the transportation system in Townsend, notes planned improvements to the transportation network, identifies issues that need to be addressed, and recommends actions to ensure safe and efficient mobility for all transportation modes in Townsend.

### *Inventory of Roads in Town*

Townsend is bisected by the train tracks of the Norfolk Southern Delmarva Secondary Line, the primary freight line serving the entire Delmarva Peninsula. Typically, four to eight freight trains travel through the heart of Townsend each day, crossing Main Street at an at-grade intersection and serving some local industrial businesses. Just south of town, the main line branches off onto the Townsend Line, serving nearby Maryland’s Eastern Shore. This track is owned by the State of Maryland and operated by the Maryland Delaware Rail Road, a private corporation. Approximately two trains per week use this track.

The Delaware Department of Transportation (DelDOT) maintains the four major streets through town Main Street, Commerce Street, South Street, and Railroad Avenue/Wiggins Mill Pond Road. DelDOT currently has no plans to upgrade these streets. Townsend is responsible for sidewalks, snow removal, maintenance, and repairs of the local streets as well as the subdivision streets in the newly annexed developments. Snow removal is done by the town. Street repairs are also completed through private firms on a bid basis. The town strives to maintain and improve one street it is responsible for each year.

### *Traffic Counts*

DelDOT collects traffic count information for most of the major roadways in the state. Traffic count information from DelDOT from 2018 was examined. Due residential growth, traffic has increased exponentially in town, particularly truck traffic. According to the Delaware State Police the average daily traffic counts decreased due to COVID-19 and school closings. Annual average daily traffic counts for Main St range from 4,142 to 4,597, and Summit Bridge Rd. range from 8,599 to 9,364. Residents have expressed concern that DelDOT data does not reflect the current traffic flow. Delaware State Police completed a speed study on June of 2020 until September 2020 to address the concerns of the residents. The average speed on Main Street was recorded as 26 miles per hour in a posted 25 mile per hour zone. Commerce Street recorded and average speed of 27 miles per hour this is also a posted 25 miles per hour zone. Volumes on Summit Bridge Road have and will continue to increase dramatically due to the new developments within the MOT area. Increased traffic volumes are a growing concern in Townsend. DelDOT should consider the creation of a Transportation Improvement District to improve traffic flow and safety.

### *Walkable Communities and Green Infrastructure*

The town's desire to improve its network of parks and open spaces led it to participate in the University of Delaware Institute for Public Administration's (IPA) Healthy/Walkable Communities Initiative in 2006. The green infrastructure of parks and trails served as the impetus for the Townsend Annual 5K Run Series, which follows local streets and greenways through town. As detailed in IPA's study, Townsend should attempt to permanently mark this course for residents to use for daily recreation. As the town acquires more open spaces and parks with the development of new subdivision and annexation areas, the interconnected network of trails, walkways, and shared pathways should continue to be a priority when designating open space. Main Street, the historic section of town, the new sub-divisions, the new municipal park, the future The Woods At Hidden Creek development, and the Townsend Elementary School are all priorities for walking trails that promote interconnectivity.

### *Harriet Tubman Byway*

Since the 2010 comprehensive plan was adopted, Main St. and Summit Bridge Rd. north of Main St. have become part of the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Byway. This designation should be included for any future programming opportunities, transportation improvements or maintenance, wayfinding, economic development, ecotourism, alleviation of flooding, and/or historic preservation. The data on this thruway show it running from 300 is Smyrna up Rt 15 to 299 across Middletown to Odessa

### Pedestrian Network and Environment Recommendations

- Consider the annexation of properties on the eastern side of town fronting Main Street in order to facilitate the installment of sidewalks where there are currently gaps. Looking into soliciting parcels on Main St. to be annexed into the Town proper.

- Continued to revise the Unified Development Code to mandate walkability features (short setbacks, sidewalks, side parking, dedicated open space or donations in lieu of dedication) to promote future development that is walkable and compatible with the existing town core.
- Purchase and install signs at regular intervals to create a walking route to raise community awareness and provide pedestrians with useful information, such as how far they've walked or how many calories they've burned.
- Work closely with the county to assure that the proposed park on Wiggins Mill Road is well connected to Townsend's transportation network and that pedestrians need not walk through a large parking lot to gain access. Wherever possible, any park trails should directly access the town's sidewalks.
- Continue promoting or adding incentives for mixed-use structures to encourage businesses in Townsend.

#### Opportunities for Physical Activity Recommendations

- Purchase and install signs at regular intervals along the town's five-kilometer walking route to raise community awareness and provide pedestrians with useful information, such as how far they've walked or how many calories they've burned.
- Consider additional street fairs, events, and festivals to acclimate Townsend residents to walking around and socializing with their neighbors.

Sidewalks greatly facilitate walking. Townsend has been aggressively completing its sidewalk infrastructure with handicapped ramp. Townsend should study how to connect sidewalks throughout the heart of town to the newer subdivisions off Railroad Road/Wiggins Mill Road and also Caldwell Corner Road to the entrance of Townsend Village I at Edgar Road.

The Town Council should continue to work with Middletown and New Castle County to connect the Townsend Municipal Park to open space in Middletown via a greenway.

Townsend should address the concerns of residents about safety issues with the greenway trail system. Additionally, improvements such as paving or boardwalks, which will need to be constructed, will have to comply with floodplains and wetlands regulations stated in the Zoning and Unified Development Code. Public safety issues with trails should be addressed to ensure that parks and greenways are adequately monitored and maintained, which would help to prevent them from becoming crime-ridden areas. Trails should also be accessible by ambulance in case of an emergency or accident.

### *Bicycle Accessibility*

Townsend is located within a bike-ride from the Michael N. Castle trail. This trail runs from Delaware City in the east to Chesapeake City, Md., in the west, and connects with Lums Pond State Park. Wiggins Mill Park is adjacent to Townsend to the north and slated to be upgraded by New Castle County to include significant recreational opportunities. While these bike-rides are relatively short in distance, safety on these routes can be an issue that the proposed greenway trail will be able to address. The town's side streets generally offer favorable cycling conditions, as will the streets have planned for the new subdivisions. Marked bike lanes would be a nice improvement on Main Street and Wiggins Mill Road, as traffic volumes and curves on both likely leave them suitable only for intermediate level or highly experienced cyclists.

### *Public Transportation*

Delaware Area Rapid Transportation (DART) First State, a Division of DelDOT, provides daily, regional bus service between Dover and Newark. There are two DART stops along Summit Bridge Rd. that are both served by bus route 302. Residents can also drive to the Odessa park-and-ride, from where they can take a fare shuttle. Paratransit service is available to eligible senior citizens and disabled persons. The Middletown Senior Center runs a bus into Townsend several times a day.

In accordance with agreements among the M-O-T communities, outlined in the Southern New Castle County plan, Townsend will move to request direct access to public transportation. Though the majority of town residents own private automobiles, the town would like to provide mobility options for those who do not, or who would prefer not to own a primary or secondary vehicle. As the M-O-T region is a growing area, a feasibility study of the types of public transportation that would be appropriate for the area should be completed. The state is currently conducting a multi-year study to determine the feasibility, cost, and preliminary planning to restore passenger-rail service between New Castle County and Dover. Most likely, this service would parallel the existing freight service, therefore, going through Townsend. It is possible that Townsend could become a rail stop on the way to Dover, although the area stop is more likely to be located in Middletown.

The State has developed a number of Park and Ride facilities throughout Delaware. These facilities offer a convenient place to park your car and board a bus and are most often used for commuting to work. There are three Park & Ride facilities within a short drive of Townsend—the Odessa Park & Ride at SR1 & SR299; the Boyd's Corner Park & Ride at S.R. 1 & Pole Bridge Road; Odessa Park & Ride at S.R. 1 and DE 299. There is also a Park and Pool facility at Pine Tree Corner (U.S. Route 13 & Pine Tree Corner Road).

### Transportation Critical Issues and Future Needs

#### *Traffic on Brook Ramble Lane*

Residents in Townsend Station are worried about the increase in the amount of traffic on Brook Ramble Lane in Townsend Station because of the Early Childhood Center. The residents are

concerned that they can't play in their yards because of speeders on Brook Ramble Lane, and they would like to see traffic-calming devices installed to combat this problem. The homeowner's association and the Early Childhood Center should work together to come up with a solution for the increased amount of traffic.

#### *Traffic on the West Side of Town*

Areas on the west side of town were indicated by residents as an issue. Increased development to the west of town has increased the amount of traffic on residential roads, as evidenced by DelDOT's estimated traffic counts. DelDOT's construction of U.S. Rt. 301 was officially completed in 2019. The construction was anticipated to alleviate traffic. However, the opposite impact was observed. It is inferred that traffic has increased in town to avoid the 301 toll. The Amazon Fulfillment Center in Middletown has dramatically increased traffic on Main Street and Railroad Road/Wiggins Mill Road. The culvert bridge along Wiggins Mill Road needs repair and replacement to accommodate the larger vehicles traveling along the road to the western side of Middletown.

#### *County Park Intersection*

Townsend has proposed a parcel transfer with New Castle County for the small park that is located at the intersection of South and Commerce Streets. The town has deemed this an unsafe intersection and is planning on adjusting the traffic pattern to allow for safe vehicle navigation.

#### *Route 71 and Main Street Intersection*

This is an intersection that is identified as dangerous. The Public Works Committee worked with DelDOT to change the crossing near Main Street and the Walgreens. Safety remains a concern at this intersection. The Town continues to request turning lanes be added to the intersection, or variable signal timing to allow one direction of traffic to make unimpeded turns, as the left turns are felt to be challenging.

#### *Growth*

Residents have expressed concern about increasing traffic volume and congestion as the area develops. Residents are also concerned about aging infrastructure, street repairs (including repaving and snow plowing), trash in the streets, and other street maintenance issues.

#### *Local Street Maintenance*

General maintenance, repairs, and sweeping of local streets are likely to become big issues for the town as the annexed areas develop. The town may need to consider structuring and supporting municipal services such as street maintenance and sweeping when expected development occurs. The town should begin planning to provide these services and estimate future funding needs and options.

#### *Commuter Rail Service*

The State is currently conducting a multi-year study to determine the feasibility, cost, and preliminary planning to restore passenger-rail service between New Castle County and Dover.

Most likely, this service would parallel the existing freight service traveling through the western end of Townsend. It is possible that Townsend could become a rail stop on the way to Dover, although the area stop is more likely to be located in Middletown or both.

#### *Walkable Access to Local Services*

Currently, residents go elsewhere for most employment, education, goods, and services. Most residents work either in Middletown (4 miles), Smyrna (5 miles), Dover (15 miles), or Wilmington (25 miles). Except for elementary school, Townsend children are bused to Old State for middle and high school. Most residents drive to Dover for shopping and to Middletown, Glasgow, and Christiana Hospital for medical care. According to the US Census Bureau, 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates the overall carpool percentage dropped to 9.0%. In Delaware approximately 21,257 residents age 16 or older walk, or use public transportation to commute to work. Average commute time to work is 25.8 minutes.

#### *Local Street Design, Community Character, and Safety*

The Townsend Zoning & Unified Development Code design standards have been updated in Article V Section 66-476 through 66-484. These sections address pedestrian safety with sidewalk design, cul-de-sac, right-of-way and cartway widths to allow room for larger emergency vehicles to maneuver in newer developments. Consider subdivision streets utilize T-intersections to discourage speeding through neighborhoods.

#### *Non-driving Population*

There are a significant percentage of children (34.3%), elderly (15.7%), and disabled residents (22.6%). Many of these people may be dependent on walking, biking, and public transit for transportation. It is especially important that all new development is pedestrian-oriented. The elderly and the disabled do have access to paratransit through DART First State, but additional resources may be needed.

#### *Reduction of Truck Traffic on Residential Streets*

Townsend has a lot of trucks (especially grain and cement trucks) traveling on Main and Commerce Streets to access the commercial and industrial activities near the railroad track. This may become especially acute now that the grain facility at Mount Pleasant has closed, leaving the Townsend facility as the only one serving all of Southern New Castle County. Coordinating with DelDOT, Townsend should consider reserving right-of-way within the annexed, but undeveloped, parcels to the northeast and/or southeast to allow for future connector roads to SR 71. By so doing, trucks would be able to access the industrial areas of town without traveling through residential districts. Reserving this land expresses the town's commitment to this course of action. Note however, that current Delaware Code prohibits new at-grade railroad crossings (17 Del. C. §603). Therefore, if the town or DelDOT wanted to develop additional roads crossing the tracks, grade separation would be required.

## Transportation Goal

Create a well-functioning system of roads, streets, sidewalks, bike paths, and transit services that serves the present and future development of the town and the region and furthers the logical development of town. The transportation plan should promote the safe and economical movement of goods and people and support both non-vehicular and vehicular modes of transportation.

## Transportation Recommendations

- Conduct a traffic survey in front of the new Townsend Early Childhood Center to determine how to reduce traffic on adjacent Brook Ramble Lane in the Townsend Station. Determine the need for traffic-calming devices on Brook Ramble Lane. (Make sure same above in earlier section)
- Continue to coordinate with New Castle County and DelDOT to determine the feasibility of annexing the county park and creating a new intersection at South and Commerce Streets.
- Continue to coordinate with the town engineer and DelDOT to prioritize areas for repair and secure funding.
- Coordinate with DelDOT to secure emergency access to SR 1 north at Pine Tree Corners.
- Create a network of nature trails, walkways, and shared pathways connecting Main Street, the historic section of town, open areas surrounding and, in the subdivisions, the new Municipal Park, the future The Woods At Hidden Creek park, and areas near the school.
- Continue to communicate with county and DART First State concerning the acquisition of public transportation stops and routes servicing Townsend.
- Continue with sidewalk installation on every street in town to promote walkability.
- Coordinate with Middletown to create a greenway.
- Put nature trails in the parks.
- Continue to work on Main Street revitalization projects to improve downtown walkability.
- Encourage the development of a balanced regional transportation system, including public transportation between Townsend and regional employment, education, and shopping.

## 2-6. Community Character and Design

*GOAL: Retain and reinforce the identity of the town and its setting within its immediate regional area. Preserve and enhance the town's social, cultural, aesthetic, and environmental amenities.*

This section of the plan reviews Townsend's unique characteristics and offers recommendations for the preservation and improvement of these distinctive features. The handbook "Better Models for Development in Delaware" was jointly produced in 2004 by the Delaware Office of State Planning Coordination and the Conservation Fund and sets forth six principles necessary for better development. This section of the plan uses these principles as a general framework to evaluate Townsend's development and recommend steps the town can take to ensure the maintenance of its unique character.

### Six Principles for Better Development

1. Conserve farmland, open space and scenic resources.
2. Maintain a clear edge between town and countryside.
3. Build livable communities.
4. Preserve historic resources.
5. Respect local character in new construction.
6. Reduce the impact of the car.

### *Overview of Community Character*

Recent annexations and the emerging patterns of development in the M-O-T area have the potential to dramatically change this community's character. As Townsend plans for the future, it must address both the historic features of the community and the implications of expected growth and development. The town is committed to preserving its character and identity through its negotiations with developers of the recently annexed properties, and any future annexation. The community's goals and planning policies expressed in this document and its soon-to-be-revised Unified Development Code will guide how Townsend addresses these challenges.

Townsend is an historic town that for many years was a quiet community centered around the railroad and comfortable with its small-town, rural setting. It is a community of predominately single-family homes, many 60 to 120 years old, arranged in a compact design with some small commercial uses and public facilities. Except for some brick public service and commercial buildings (church, old and new firehouses, post office, interim town hall), the architecture tends toward wood-frame buildings clad in wood or wood-look siding. Homes tend to be either large Victorian homes on large lots, or smaller frame, foursquare, or bungalow homes on small, narrow lots with very small front yards. The historic core of town is characterized by a wide diversity of sizes and values. Gables, dormers, bay windows, and porches are common, although many porches have been closed in to create additional interior

rooms. Although many of the smaller homes are similar in style, over time each has been personalized and changed so that no two look exactly alike. There are no large strip malls, large office buildings, or apartment complexes. The existing commercial buildings are all of a residential scale. Townsend has the only operating grain station in southern New Castle County. Using the six principles listed above, the following are offered as recommendations the town should consider to maintain its unique character

### *1. Conserve Farmland, Open Space and Scenic Resources*

A very important element that contributes to the town's character is its natural resources. The historic town core area does not have a significant number of natural resources, but forests, streams, wetlands, and agricultural lands surround the town. With recent annexations, some of these resources are now within the town's boundaries and have the potential to provide significant enhancement to the town. Townsend updated its environmental regulations in its Zoning and Unified Development Code in 2000, 2003, 2004, and proposes changes in 2020 to provide greater protection for wetlands, floodplains, and water resource protection areas within the town limits.

Although the Town has preserved a small section of town using the "Preservation" zoning classification, the town should consider zoning additional lands, including floodplains, wetlands and dedicated open space, as Preservation in order to protect environmental resources.

The Townsend Municipal Park is deed-restricted for permanent preservation as a park. Also, the town requires all new development to have at least ten percent open space. Townsend hopes to annex a significant amount of land to the west of town to be used as a greenbelt, where agricultural activities are encouraged.

Trees and landscaping in developed areas and the mature-forested sections of town add to the community character, enhance the visual appeal of the town, and add environmental benefits. They also act as natural filtration systems, helping to mitigate the environmental effects from suburbanization by improving air and water quality. Trees reduce the need for energy by naturally cooling the air, increasing real estate values, and aiding in stormwater management by stabilizing soil.

Street trees are needed in new developments and redevelopment to enhance the small-town feel of Townsend. However, the required street-tree species listed in the Townsend Zoning and Unified Development Code (Article V, Section 506 B.5.) include several species notorious for being weak-wooded (prone to breaking limbs), dropping fruits, and heaving sidewalks. The town should continue to protect this valuable resource by revising landscaping requirements with species more appropriate for the urban environment. The town should also increase the number of trees planted in public spaces, such as the Townsend Municipal Park and along roadways.

Townsend is fortunate to have significant open spaces surrounding the town on all sides, which contributes to Townsend being a desirable place to live. Large forested tracts are located to the south near The Woods At Hidden Creek, to the east near SR 71, along Wiggins Mill Pond, and in other areas scattered throughout town as seen in the aerial view on Map 2. A large county-owned park is located to the north of town, and preserved agricultural lands are located to the northeast and west of town. Townsend should continue to take steps to preserve these valuable resources.

The regulations for water resource protection areas only allow up to 30 percent of the land to have impervious cover (paving, buildings and other surfaces that prevent water from soaking into the soil). One method to improve the character of this development and protect natural resources is to cluster the development of smaller lots onto a portion of the site (close to the existing town for interconnectivity and walkability), then preserve the remainder of the site as open space. An additional benefit of this approach would be the creation of a greenbelt of open space at the northern and southern edges of town, where much of the vacant land exists. Lands to the north could connect to the county park and other protected lands to the north.

In summary, this plan recommends that Townsend continue to work to preserve lands through the development of a greenbelt. The greenbelt should be defined in the UDO, and an additional zoning category should be added to allow agricultural activities within the town limits. Landowners in the areas slated for preservation should be encouraged to participate in agricultural-preservation programs, transfer-of-development-rights programs, or other nonprofit land-conservation organizations.

## *2. Maintain a Clear Edge Between Town and Countryside*

Surrounding geography has been somewhat helpful to Townsend in maintaining separation between the town and the surrounding area. Wiggins Mill Pond and the county park serve as the town's northern border, while open spaces and protected agricultural lands serve as its western border. SR 71 acts as a barrier to the east. The town's southern border is not as well defined and consists of unincorporated land surrounding The Woods At Hidden Creek. However, much of this land has significant environmental constraints identified as State Resource Areas or Critical Natural Areas, which will restrict development.

Although Wiggins Mill Pond forms the border to the north, just a few miles farther north is the growing town of Middletown. While Wiggins Mill Pond effectively serves as a boundary between the two towns, it will be increasingly important for Townsend to preserve the town identity so the distinction between the two communities is not blurred. As detailed in the future land use section and seen on the Future Land Use map (Map 5), Townsend has proposed the development of a medium-density residential area west of SR 71 and just southeast of Middletown's southernmost boundary. Currently, this land is in agricultural and low-density residential use. If developed, it will be necessary to carefully consider the design of the development to ensure distinction between the two towns. A prominent "Welcome to Townsend" sign would be useful in this area. Additionally, the property should be designed in

keeping with Townsend's small-town, historic character to distinguish it from more suburban-style developments prominent in the region.

The eastern gateway into town, located near the end of Main Street and the intersection with SR 71 and Pine Tree Corners Road, is currently in need of some unification and aesthetic improvements. Motorists driving through on SR 71 have no idea that Townsend is only a few feet away, and this reality could be emphasized. Perhaps the town could initiate a gateway study through WILMAPCO, including the county, DeIDOT, and the landowners to make some improvements to this critical area.

Close coordination with New Castle County will be necessary in order ensure that the unincorporated areas around Townsend do not develop in a manner or at a scale that will detract from the town's character. The town should continue to be involved with Southern New Castle County's Memorandum of Agreement with the county, Middletown, and Odessa to ensure adequate notification and commenting procedures for areas within Townsend's Areas of Concern.

### *3. Build Livable Communities*

Townsend should continue to offer its residents a high quality of life by focusing on appropriately mixing commercial and residential uses within identified areas. Commercial uses in town should cater to the needs of residents seeking convenient access to retail and services and should be accessible to pedestrians to encourage walking while having little adverse effect on the residential community. Residents are concerned about the absence of convenience stores, and there is some concern about the how the sewer limitation imposed by New Castle County will affect proposals for commercial uses. Townsend will need to closely coordinate with the county when designing the new commercial uses on SR 71 to deal with the sewer limitations.

The newly constructed church on the northside of commercially zoned properties in Townsend Village II are accessible by SR 71 but should also be pedestrian-friendly and accessible through the residential development Townsend Village II. Downtown future commercial uses should be developed in a manner consistent with the size and character of buildings in Townsend's historic district. In the area designated as the Town Center Redevelopment (see Map 5), the intent is to permit small-scale commercial uses with residential units above that are in keeping with Townsend's historic character. Particular focus should be on developing future commercial uses so pedestrian access is facilitated.

The provision of affordable housing is another necessary component of a livable community. Median housing values in Townsend have increased significantly, mostly because of the higher prices of the larger homes in the new developments of Townsend Village I and II. Townsend should strive to provide rental opportunities and affordable housing by diversifying its housing stock. The housing-affordability analysis suggests that housing is generally affordable in Townsend.

According to Certificates of Occupancy information provided by Townsend in fall 2007 and 2000 Census data, almost 95% of the housing stock in Townsend is single-family attached or detached homes. This number is significantly higher than that of the county (53%) and the state (58.8%). This indicates that the town could seek to diversify housing types and could benefit from an increased number of rental properties in order to provide a more livable community.

The provision of affordable housing also involves addressing some of the maintenance issues that arise in the historic downtown district. Older homes, such as those prevalent in the historic downtown area, can be more expensive to maintain than newer construction. There are existing programs in Delaware that provide funding for housing rehabilitation and affordable-housing development.

Town-sponsored community events enhance the town's appeal and create a sense of community. There are a number of town-sponsored events that help solidify residents' pride in Townsend --Town Fair, Movie Night, Easter Egg Hunt and Christmas Caroling all held in the Municipal Park. The Annual Town Fair includes a parade, games, rides, food, raffles, contests, a float competition, and other events. It is important that the town make a distinct effort to revitalize the social aspect of town, because residents have noticed that with growth, the community feel has diminished. By promoting social events, the town can bring together the residents in the older part of town with those from the newer developments.

#### *4. Preserve Historic Resources*

As has been noted throughout this plan, Townsend's historic resources are one of the town's greatest assets. The town should work toward enhancing Townsend's historic resources by preserving the character of the historic district and promoting appropriate redevelopment within the district and downtown redevelopment area. The historic district was entered into the National Register for Historic Places in 1986 and encompasses most of the original town. It includes buildings that date back to around 1840 and later homes that offer fine examples of Gothic Revival and Queen Anne—style buildings. In addition to the historic district, two buildings are on the National Register of Historic Places: The Brook Ramble House and the Vandyke Heath House, both dwellings of the historic rural elite. In addition, New Castle County has recognized a number of properties on Main Street just outside town with Historic Preservation zoning. One of these buildings is the Townsend Elementary School.

The historic core of town has a pedestrian orientation, both functionally and visually, which makes the town picturesque and has the added benefit of making the community easy to get around and safe for residents, including children. Streets are grid-like (so it is easy to figure out where you are) with relatively short blocks. The streets have sidewalks, and many areas are lined with large trees. Driveways are narrow (8 feet to 12 feet) with garages, when present, behind or to the rear of the house. However, there have been some complaints about trash and debris on several properties scattered around the town. This is most acute within the historic core of the town and needs to be addressed.

It is recommended that the town continue to ensure that changes to buildings within the Townsend Historic District are consistent with the neighborhood's character and uphold guidelines provided by the National Historic Registry in order to maintain the Historic District. Next, the town should promote the necessary redevelopment of properties within the historic district and give historic preservation a high priority in the downtown redevelopment plans. The town should make certain that residents are aware of the Historic Preservation Tax Credit Program that can assist property owners in preserving and rehabilitating their historic properties. Additionally, the town should work with property owners to ensure that new construction is not out of character with the historic district.

#### *5. Respect Local Character in New Construction*

The primary concern expressed by residents is that new development be part of, and fit, the character of the town not just be typical suburban larger lots. There is concern that the town's identity will be lost as new development occurs and residents want to maintain the small-town feel of the community. Residents want new development that is designed to reflect the character and small-town atmosphere of Townsend. In essence, new development should be integrated into the fabric of the existing town.

To address these concerns, the town updated the Zoning and Unified Development Code to develop and institute design guidelines for new development. The purpose of these guidelines would be to ensure consistency with the historic character of Townsend by requiring that new developments in Townsend contribute a high level of design quality to the built environment. A well-crafted standard would afford developers, architects, and designers the flexibility to meet the challenge of designing attractive new communities while compelling them to meet minimum design standards and provide for adequate variety in new construction.

Other overarching issues include the adequacy and consistency of land-management regulations, and underlying these issues was a consistent concern about the potential impacts of development of the areas annexed into town. This was coupled with a concern that future commissioners might not share the same vision as those in office now and might be less inclined to follow the current philosophy regarding the character of future growth. According to a survey of the residents, they want the town to control community design, including connectivity of streets and pathways throughout the town to promote a small-town feel. These concerns should be of utmost importance of the Town Council and the Planning Commissioners as annexations are accepted into the community.

Throughout the planning process, the retention of Townsend's small-town character and local identity has been of primary importance to residents and town officials. Significant developments that could change that character are being planned inside the community. Particularly important are issues of connectivity to the existing street network, scale and design of the residential units, and overall layout of the developments so that they reflect a more traditional community pattern. It seems that the town generally has good relationships with

developers in the area, and this relationship should be strengthened by regular discussion throughout the development process.

#### *6. Reduce the Impact of the Cars on the Residential Communities*

One reason why new development so often looks different from older development is the switch from a pedestrian to a vehicular orientation. It is possible to create new pedestrian-oriented developments without sacrificing vehicular convenience. The presence of sidewalks and street trees is one aspect of pedestrian orientation. Other elements include small lot sizes, maintaining a residential building scale, placing garages to the rear of a home or property, residential driveways which are only one vehicle wide at the curb (maximum nine to twelve feet wide), shorter block lengths (200 to 500 feet), and pedestrian cut-throughs on cul-de-sacs and long blocks.

Architectural detailing such as gables, dormers, porches, interesting entryways, and windows also enhance the pedestrian scale and character of development. Finally, large parking lots and expanses of asphalt are very uncomfortable for pedestrians. The town can mitigate these by minimizing their size, placing them to the rear or side of buildings, screening them from the sidewalk with attractive walls, fences or landscaping, and providing landscaped pedestrian walks through parking lots. These can be regulated through the Zoning and Unified Development Code. The transportation section of this plan details some of the impediments to pedestrian movement in town and recommends a focus on connectivity and coordination with the Healthy Walkable Communities Program to provide adequate sidewalks and bike paths throughout town. Additionally, completion of a greenway connecting the M-O-T region would significantly reduce the need for a car.

#### Community Character and Design Goal

Maintain the community's identity and small-town character in the design of new developments, through attention to scale, layout, connectivity and access, street and development naming, and location of community facilities. Sufficient land should be set aside for community facilities, recreational areas, and utilities to meet future needs, and the town's historic district, environmentally sensitive areas, and open spaces should be preserved.

#### Community Character and Design Recommendations

- As appropriate, the town should consult with the Office of State Planning Coordination regarding the community design initiatives being undertaken by their office.
- Revise the Zoning and Unified Development Code to assure that pedestrian orientation is required in new developments.
- Revise the Zoning and Unified Development Code to minimize the impact of parking lots through placement, screening, and landscaped pedestrian walkways.

- Consider zoning appropriate portions of the newly annexed lands as “Preservation” to protect environmental and historic resources.
- Consider revising the Zoning and Unified Development Code to allow cluster-type development on lands in water resource protection areas to maximize land preserved as open space.
- Consider creating a historic overlay zone of the Historic Register District, with a Historic Review Board that oversees design standards, to provide an additional layer of oversight for development and redevelopment in this area of historic structures. The town should draft ordinances that apply specifically to the historic core of town and the Main Street Streetscape and the Downtown Revitalization Project proposal area.
- Increase the number of municipal tree-plantings in parks and open spaces along streets. The town should apply for urban-forestry grants to help offset the costs of planting and maintenance through the Urban and Community Forestry Program. The town should also work with the New Castle County Cooperative Extension Service or the State Urban Forester to identify the most appropriate species of street trees that survive in an urban environment and do not damage sidewalks.
- Initiate a gateway study of Main Street east of town to SR 71, through WILMAPCO, including the County, DelDOT, and the landowners to make some improvements to this critical area.
- Ensure appropriate development in the north of town to create a distinct boundary between Townsend and Middletown. This should be accomplished through design standards, adequate signage, and a greenbelt.
- Continue to fund the Main Street Streetscape efforts in the three-phase plan as funds become available.
- Research the feasibility of a downtown-revitalization project that would invest in the town center and support mixed-use development.
- Consider supporting mixed-use development in future annexation areas.
- Keep the town’s identity of the small, residential, bedroom community.
- Continue to promote cultural and social events to enhance community cohesiveness between residents in the older section of town and the recently annexed areas.
- Continue discussing the feasibility of participation in a transfer-of-development-rights program.

- Continue to work with the existing owners of non-residential properties to clean up trash and debris, especially those within residential districts. Carefully regulate the location and type of any proposed non-residential uses to prevent additional problems.

## 2-7. Land Use, Annexation, and Areas of Concern

*GOAL: Manage future land uses and transportation systems to achieve efficient functioning of the town for the convenience and well-being of its residents, workers, and visitors.*

*GOAL: Coordinate the development of the town with growth of the surrounding areas and with the plans of New Castle County and the state.*

*GOAL: Provide adequate and efficient public facilities, utilities, and services to meet the needs of present and future residents.*

### 2-7a. Existing Land Use

Provided in the Appendix, Map 4 depicts Townsend's existing land uses. This map was developed from two windshield surveys. The first was conducted in 2001 as part of the background work for Townsend's 2003 comprehensive plan. The second was done in November 2007 for this plan document. The third was completed with the 2020 plan update. All land use information was then verified and approved by the town.

#### *Residential*

As Map 4 indicates, Townsend is predominantly a residential community. Most of the residential development in the town consists of single-family detached homes. Some residential units are located above commercial uses.

#### *Commercial*

Most of Townsend's commercial uses are concentrated in two areas. The first is around the Main Street and Railroad Avenue intersection. The uses in this area include a real estate office, pizza parlors and a beauty salon/barbershop. The second area is located around the intersection of Main Street and Summit Bridge Road (SR 71) and includes a liquor store, Jaime's Auto Shop, General Dollar store, Colonial Auto, Walgreen's and a private daycare facility.

There are two additional commercial uses areas that are located outside of the two concentrated areas. A vacant commercial/office building is located at the south edge of town near the industrial park, and a vacant commercial building is located on Wiggins Mill Road north of its intersection with Railroad Avenue.

#### *Community*

Townsend's pattern of development was strongly influenced by the intersection of Main Street running east-west and the railroad tracks running north-south through the center of town. It is here that most of the town's community uses are located, including two churches, post office, the Townsend Volunteer Fire Company, the old firehouse (now used for storage by the

Appoquinimink School District), and the Townsend Elementary School and Early Childhood Development Center. An important municipal use, the Townsend Town Hall, is located on Main Street. Utilities within the town boundary include the water supply and distribution system and a number of stormwater-management facilities. These systems were described in Section 2-3.

### *Parks and Recreation*

As Map 4 shows only two parcels are designated park and open space within Townsend's municipal boundary. The larger of these is the 11.5-acre Townsend Municipal Park on Edgar Road in Townsend Village I. The second park is a school playground located at the Townsend Elementary School.

Most of Townsend's open space can be found in the new subdivisions. Typically, these spaces consist of floodplain associated with streams, stormwater-management facilities, or wetlands. Another open space area, the New Castle County Townsend Park, is located on the southside of the town.

Delaware residents desire outdoor recreation space to include walking, jogging and bike paths, hiking trails, playgrounds, community gardens and a public swimming pool.

### *Business and Industry*

A mix of business and industrial uses are concentrated in the southwest quadrant of the town along the railroad and in the existing industrial complex. One of these is the Mountaire Grainery, which is the only grain processing facility in southern New Castle County, and another is Heritage Concrete. Waste Industries (GFL) is located along Cannery Lane. Additional industrial uses in this area include welding, fabrication, auto repair and related storage, and masonry-building-materials storage.

### *Vacant*

To date a portion of the town's vacant land is the 97-acre The Woods At Hidden Creek property annexed in 2000, located south of Main Street adjacent to the Townsend Elementary School.

### *Land Use Changes 2002-2020*

Table 16 indicates land use changes between the 2002 and 2020. As the figure shows, significant changes occurred in land use during this time as a large amount of vacant land was developed into residential and commercial uses. The residential increase is attributed to the construction of homes in Townsend Village I and Townsend Village II, and the increase in commercial use is attributed to a new Walgreen's pharmacy, a daycare facility, and a professional office around the intersection of Summit Bridge Road (SR 71) and Main Street. Also, the addition of Townsend Municipal Park greatly increased the amount of land for parks and recreation.

Table 16. Townsend Land Use Changes, 2002-2020

	2002		2010		Change in Number of Acres
	Number of Acres	Percent of Total	Number of Acres	Percent of Total	
Land Use					
Residential	41.2	6.9	141.7	22.1	+100.5
Commercial	2.3	0.4	15.3	2.4	+13.0
Community Uses	4.9	0.8	22.1	3.5	+17.2
Business and Industry	18.6	3.1	18.9	3.0	+0.3
Park and Recreation	0.2	0.0	12.4	1.9	+12.2
Vacant	479.3	79.9	348.0	54.4	-131.3
Subtotal	546.5	91.1	558.4	87.3	+11.9
Roads, Railroads, and Other	53.5	8.9	81.6	12.7	+28.1
Unclassified Areas					
Total	600.0	100.0	640.0	100.0	+40.0

Source: IPA, 2010

### 2-7b. Planning Environment

A jurisdiction’s planning environment encompasses not only its own goals and strategies, but also those of its surrounding area and the state. Accordingly, this plan’s policies regarding future land use, annexation, and areas of concern consider the development climate in the Middletown-Odessa-Townsend area and the state’s policy and spending strategies.

#### *Development Climate*

The Middletown-Odessa-Townsend (M-O-T) area has experienced rapid growth during the past two decades, and continued growth pressures are expected even in consideration of the recent economic downturn. The area northwest of Townsend toward Middletown has seen significant development, especially along the U.S. Rt. 301 corridor. The development known as “Westown” will continue to add to this growth pressure. In addition, the recent identification of the preferred alignment for the relocation of U.S. Rt. 301 will place additional growth pressure in the area.

To address the additional growth pressures, a regional master-plan process was initiated through a memorandum of agreement (MOA). Participants in this MOA include state, county, and local governments and the school districts. The regional planning area has been divided into five sub-areas, with the first priority given to the areas surrounding the towns of Middletown, Odessa, and Townsend. A more detailed description of this planning effort is found in Chapter 3, Inter-Governmental Coordination.

### *Strategies for State Policy and Spending*

In 1999 the Cabinet Committee on State Planning Issues approved the Strategies for State Policies and Spending, outlining needs and concerns for future state planning and growth and identifying geographic areas where the state was most prepared for growth. Updated in 2004, the State Strategies document delineates four investment levels across the state, with different types of state investments targeted for each investment level. In Levels 1 and 2 areas, the state would channel most of its intensive investments, such as new school facilities, roads, state service centers, and public safety facilities. Level 3 areas, slated for growth areas only when Level 1 and 2 areas are built up, would receive state funding only when needed to support Level 1 or 2 areas. Development is not preferred in Level 4 areas, and the state plans to make investments to address only public health or safety needs. Out of Play areas are not available for development or redevelopment, and, like Level 4 areas, state investment is limited.

The State Strategies for the Townsend region are depicted on Map 7. The majority of the areas in Townsend's municipal boundaries are designated as Level 2 with a small core area of Level 1. Level 3 areas are located on the southern and eastern boundaries of the town. The areas surrounding the town are predominantly Level 4 or Out of Play.

### *2-7c. Future Land Use Within Current Town Boundaries*

This section describes Townsend's recommended future land uses and shows their possible relationship to the comprehensive rezoning that should follow adoption of this plan. Map 5 depicts recommended future land uses within the current town boundaries.

#### *Residential*

As Map 5 in the Appendix shows, the predominant future land use in town is residential. This residential development is a mixture of both older residential areas supplemented with recent construction during the past decade.

#### *Commercial*

This plan recommends that commercial land uses remain in the following areas.

- Around the intersection of Railroad Avenue and Main Street.
- Around the intersection of Main Street/Pine Tree Road and Summit Bridge Road (SR 71).
- At the southern end of Cannery Lane.

It also recommends additional commercial areas on the west side of Summit Bridge Road (SR 71) near Townsend Village II.

#### *Industrial*

As shown in Map 5, this plan recommends that industrial uses remain concentrated in the southwest quadrant of town formed by the Railroad Avenue and Main Street intersection.

### *Community/ Institutional*

This plan supports the continuation of Townsend’s community and institutional land uses. As Map 5 shows, most of these are concentrated around Main Street and Sunnyside Lane and include schools, libraries, government buildings, community centers, community facilities, parks, and churches.

### *Town-Center Redevelopment*

Map 5 delineates a town-center redevelopment area roughly consisting of the properties on either side of Main Street between Edgar Road and South Street. This recommendation does not necessarily call for creation of a new zoning district. Rather, it identifies an area within which the town might put together a series of actions aimed at revitalizing the area. A number of these actions have been identified throughout this plan.

### *2.7d. Zoning*

Map 4 in the Appendix depicts Townsend’s current zoning. As noted earlier, Townsend’s zoning and subdivision regulations were consolidated into a single development ordinance in 2000. This ordinance establishes eight zoning districts. Six of these are residential: R, R-1, R-1A, R-2, R-3 and R-AA. The other zoning districts are Preservation, Commercial, and Industrial.

### *Residential Zoning Districts*

As Map 4 shows, most of the town is zoned residential. In addition to dwelling units, permitted uses in the residential zoning districts include community uses. R designation is for single family detached homes, and R-1 and R-1A are for single-family homes on smaller lots. R-2 is also a single-family residential district that reflects the lot sizes that exist in the original town of Townsend. The R-AA Zone permits duplexes, townhouses, condos, and single-family homes as well as assisted-living facilities for adults over 55 years of age. R-3 residential district permits the construction of townhouses.

### *Preservation Zoning District*

The Preservation Zone is designed to protect open space, natural resources, and areas of special value. A former school site on the south side of Finley Street is the only parcel zoned Preservation. The municipal park on Edgar Road is not zoned Preservation because the construction of a community center or a town hall is not allowed in this zoning district.

### *Commercial Zoning District*

Most of Townsend’s commercial zoning is located along Main Street and SR71. The Commercial Zone is designed for a variety of commercial activities and targeted toward meeting the needs of the town and the surrounding area. The commercial zoning allows for apartments above the commercial building under “mixed use”.

*Industrial Zoning District*

Industrial zoning is located in the southwest quadrant of town formed by the intersection of Main Street and Railroad Avenue. The types of uses allowed in the Industrial Zone include manufacturing, assembling, and distribution facilities as well as offices.

*2.7e. Land Use and Zoning Link*

Title 22, Section 702(c) of the *Delaware Code* requires that each municipality, “within 18 months of the adoption of a comprehensive development plan or revision thereof, amend its official zoning map to rezone all lands within the municipality in accordance with the uses of land [i.e., future land use] provided for in the comprehensive development plan.” Table 17 displays how Townsend’s existing zoning districts might match up with the land uses recommended on Map 5.

Table 17: Land Use and Zoning Link

Land Use Category in Map 5	Zoning District(s) to be Considered in Comprehensive Rezoning	Notes
Residential	R Residential R-1 Residential R-1A. Residential R-A Residential R-AA Residential R-2 Residential R3 Residential SR Residential	
Commercial	(C) Commercial	(a)
Industrial	(I) Industrial	(a)
Community/Institutional	All Zoning Districts	(a)
Town Center	All Zoning Districts	(a), (b)

Notes:

a. While the Town has designated certain areas on its future land use map (Map 5) as “Community/Institutional”, and “Town Center,” this Comprehensive Plan does not require the Town Council to zone with these specific designations when rezoning in accordance with this Comprehensive Plan. These uses may be placed in any zoning district which the Town Council designates as permissible under Townsend’s Unified Development Code or other applicable land use regulations.

b. While the Town Center Area is encouraged by this Comprehensive Plan, the Town is not required to adopt a Town Center zoning designation within its land use ordinances. Other zoning classifications (including but not limited to residential, commercial, suburban reserve and planned community designations) may be used to encourage flexible development strategies in the Town Center Area.

As noted in Table 17, the matchups between land use categories and zoning districts are intended as guidance for the Town Council and the Planning Commission to consider during the rezoning process. It is not intended to preclude either the development of new zoning districts or revisions to the Zoning and Unified Development Code and other land use regulations.

### 2-7f. *Annexation Areas*

The Townsend Annexation Corridor Map 1 also identifies proposed annexation areas, areas Townsend would like to include within its town boundaries. The largest portions of the proposed areas for annexation are located west and south of the current town boundary and along the west side SR 71. Several small enclaves (parcels in New Castle County that are completely surrounded by Townsend's corporate limits) are also identified for possible annexation. These are located at the west side of the intersection of Wiggins Mill Road and Railroad Avenue and at the southern end of Commerce Street between South Street and the railroad, at the north end of Walnut St. and at the south-eastern end of Main St. The Town has made a 30-year annexation plan of surrounding areas for future growth. The

The plan recommends that detailed master planning be considered before development in these areas would occur through annexation. Some of the questions that master planning should address include the following:

- How would development be coordinated with current and future development activities underway in Middletown?
- What transportation improvements would be required to handle increased traffic, especially as impacted by the new U.S. Rt. 301 facility/interchange located northwest of this area?
- What provisions will be made to increase connectivity between Middletown and Townsend (e.g., biking and pedestrian facilities in addition to vehicular connections)?
- What opportunities exist for promoting a livable community that would provide for:
  - Increased employment opportunities;
  - A mix of housing choices;
  - Locating commercial and institutional uses within walking distance of residential areas to promote the development of healthy lifestyles?
- What opportunities are there for this area to become the receiving area for a transfer-of-development-rights (TDR) program?

By examining these questions, the town goals to manage future land use and transportation systems and coordinate development with that of the surrounding areas can also be addressed.

### 2-7g. *Areas of Concern*

Areas of Concern are areas whose future development is of interest to Townsend. Three Areas of Concern are identified on Map 5 in the Appendix.

#### *Area A*

Area A, consisting of about 437 acres, is located on the east side of Route 71 and is of interest to the town since it borders the town gateway from the east. A large portion of this area

contains lands that are deed-restricted and thus precluded from intensive development. Other portions of this area contain environmental constraints, which also limit development.

#### *Area B*

Area B encompasses approximately 5,112 acres and wraps around the general vicinity of the town on the south, west, and north boundaries. It is intended for consideration as a greenbelt and for the sending area for the transfer of development rights. It would also link up with the proposed greenbelt area of Middletown. Townsend is creating its own TDR program similar to the one developed in Middletown. This should be a coordinated effort involving private developers and the town to ensure a program that meets the needs of all parties involved and can be utilized effectively.

#### *Area C*

Area C is the 194-acre Wiggins Mill Park is located adjacent to the northwest corner of the town and owned by New Castle County. The county has indicated a desire to involve the town in the development of this park. Some of the topics that both the town and the county should consider include design, infrastructure capacity, and associated environmental impacts.

#### Land Use, Annexation, and Areas of Concern Recommendations

- In accordance with state law, bring zoning map into congruence with land use map following adoption of this plan.
- Continue efforts to coordinate future land use strategies through the Southern New Castle County Master Plan.
- Consider a memorandum of agreement among Townsend, Middletown, New Castle County, the Office of State Planning Coordination, and DelDOT to develop a master plan for Areas of Concern designated on Map 5 with “A” and “B”.
- Continue involvement with New Castle County in the development of Wiggins Mill Park.
- Consider revisions or additions to the Zoning and Unified Development Code that:
  - Incorporate this plan’s Community Character recommendations.
  - Ensure that future development densities are consistent with the goals and policies of this plan.
  - Examine uses allowed in each zoning district.
  - Encourage a diverse and affordable housing stock through mixed-use development, including townhomes.
  - Promote a mix of residential, commercial, office and “live-work” units in the town-center redevelopment area.

## Chapter 3. Coordination and Implementation

### 3-1. Intergovernmental Coordination

The intergovernmental coordination element for the Townsend Comprehensive Plan Update is unique due to the multi-agency process which was utilized. This process was carried out through a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) among the Delaware Department of Transportation, Office of State Planning Coordination, Delaware Department of Agriculture, New Castle County, Appoquinimink School District, Colonial School District, Smyrna School District, the Wilmington Area Planning Council, and the towns of Middletown, Odessa, Townsend, Clayton, and Smyrna. This MOA was executed in order to produce a comprehensive regional Master Plan to accommodate future growth in southern New Castle County.

The working group involved in this MOA has met numerous times during 2008, 2009, and 2010 to develop the regional Master Plan. In addition, individual meetings have been held with New Castle County and the Office of State Planning Coordination to discuss details of this effort. The Southern New Castle County Master Plan area has been divided into sub-areas with the Middletown, Odessa, and Townsend sub-area designated as the initial study area. Townsend has actively participated in the Southern New Castle County Master Plan, which has also helped to shape the town's comprehensive plan update; specifically, the areas of concern, annexation areas, and future land uses.

The recommendations contained in the future land use section call for further coordination, specifically between Townsend, Middletown, New Castle County, the Office of State Planning Coordination, and DelDOT through an additional MOA, which would lead to the joint development of a plan for Townsend's proposed annexation areas as well as areas of concern. Issues such as community design, infrastructure, transportation, environmental resources, and open space would need to be addressed.

### 3-2. Plan Implementation

Implementation is one of the most important parts of the comprehensive-planning process, as it provides direction to the town to accomplish the ideas discussed in its comprehensive plan. Also, it is recognized that the town of Townsend cannot implement this plan update without coordinating with other governments and agencies, in particular New Castle County and the many agencies within the state of Delaware.

The following is a summary of the main recommendations made throughout this plan update. It provides a guide to actions that will be needed following the adoption of this plan by the town and its certification by the state. It should be noted that the most immediate

recommendation requiring attention is the updating and revision of the town's Zoning and Unified Development Code. An updated ordinance will provide the town with a better tool for maintaining the town's character and charm as it continues to grow.

#### Housing Plan Recommendations

- Coordinate with DSHA and HUD to create a resource library for current and potential residents, detailing local, state, and federal homeownership/mortgage-assistance programs.
- Encourage the development of a variety of housing types, including more-compact alternatives to the single-family home, such as townhomes and condos.
- Consider making provisions for accessory dwelling units in the municipal code to allow for an increase in the supply of rental properties.

#### Government Recommendations

- Town Council should include estimating the overall costs and timing of development in order to provide regulatory oversight of new development, and the provision of maintenance and town services and facilities, both new and expanded.
- The town charter last updated in 2020, including addressing the current description of the town's boundaries and updated procedures.
- The town should consider hiring additional employees, including a Part-Time Code Enforcement Officer, additional maintenance assistance.
- Continue to support the Finance Committee's goal to increasing revenue through business licensing fees, or a new business tax.

#### Public Safety Recommendations

- Continue to provide money and assistance to the Townsend Volunteer Fire Company as it expands to meet the needs of a growing town through impact fees on new-home construction and other sources.
- Work with New Castle County and the state to ensure adequate emergency medical services for the community and the region.
- Reimplement the Neighborhood Watch Program, possible alternative patrol options such as private security.
- Encourage the development of strategies to address community policing and operations.

### Education Recommendations

- Promote the continued role of the Townsend Elementary School as a community education, recreation, and cultural resource while developing and growing the partnership between the elementary school and the early-childhood center.
- Work with developers and the school district to reserve an alternative site for a new, larger elementary school within the town's boundaries, close enough that local children can walk as well as convenient for school bus access.
- Continue to encourage childcare providers to locate in Townsend.
- Continue to promote educational activities (e.g., summer camps), at the Municipal Park through partnerships with local nonprofits such as Girls, Inc., or the Boys and Girls Club of Delaware.

### Healthcare Recommendation

- Encourage professional healthcare services to locate within the town and long-range planning by the state and county for adequate primary healthcare and emergency facilities to serve the M-O-T region.

### Solid-Waste Recommendations

- Continue to provide trash-removal service at the most affordable rate by providing the contract to the lowest qualified bidder. The Town should consider creating a waste management department.
- Contact Recycle Bank and request more information about their recycling program.
- Encourage residents to compost their yard waste or take it to Pine Tree Transfer Station for recycling.
- The Town should look into a yard waste collection program for the residents during the early spring through the end of fall.

### Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Recommendations

- Review current lands zoned "Preservation" and consider rezoning other open space areas in town as "Preservation."
- Consider updating the Zoning and Unified Development Code to include a zoning category that would designate Townsend Municipal Park as open space, but still allow structures such as a community center, or recreational equipment, bike paths, hiking trails, dog park, and splash pad.

- Consider updating the Zoning and Unified Development Code to include an agricultural and/or agribusiness zoning designation that allows agricultural activities, including livestock, and low-density development (about one dwelling unit/five acres) within the greenbelt in the town.
- Coordinate with Middletown to protect areas identified by both towns as greenbelt.
- Work with Delaware Agricultural Lands Preservation Foundation, Delaware Department of Agriculture, and New Castle County to encourage landowner participation in preservation districts and easements.
- Work with New Castle County to participate in the Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) program and designate sending and receiving areas in town.
- Continue to participate in the Community Wildlife Habitat Certification Project and encourage homeowners to complete the application for certification.
- Secure an easement near the southeast corner of the municipal park to provide safe access to the park from the center of town.
- Continue to survey residents about their local park needs and interests.
- Study maintenance and liability issues, arrangements, and costs for new local parks or open space.
- Locate future parks, both active and passive, to be accessible to all town residents and linked to other parks to provide corridors for recreation and wildlife.
- Work with New Castle County, Middletown, Delaware Greenways, DNREC, and others to establish a greenway/bikeway between Noxontown Pond and Wiggins Mill Pond with a connection to Townsend.
- To address connectivity of the Townsend Municipal Park with the historic section of town, Townsend should encourage private-property owners on Chestnut Street to allow public access through private property to access the park. Private-property owners are protected from liability according to Delaware Code Title 7 Chapter 59 “Public Recreation on Private Lands.”
- Improve landscaping and add boardwalks where necessary to protect wetlands and environmentally sensitive areas along trails and greenways.
- Support New Castle County efforts to develop a regional park facility adjacent to Wiggins Mill pond as part of the Southern New Castle County Land Acquisition and Development plan.

### Other Community Needs and Services Recommendation

- Continue the relationship with the M-O-T Senior Center to provide recreational opportunities for the elderly population in Townsend.

### Public Water Supply Recommendations

- Continue to ensure adequate water capacity for present and future residents.
- Encourage homes nearest to town to be built first.

### Wastewater Recommendations

- Continue negotiating with New Castle County to increase the sewer capacity stated in the agreement to allow growth in areas that are in accordance with the State Investment Strategies and the SNCC Memorandum of Agreement Local Area Plan for the M-O-T region.
- Continue to investigate the possibility of connecting to Middletown Municipal Wastewater Treatment System to increase sewer capacity.
- Research the feasibility of Townsend building its own municipal wastewater-treatment facility.
- The town should work with the county and state to secure funding to make connecting to the county sewer more affordable for residents.
- Encourage homes to be built nearest to town first.

### Stormwater Management Recommendations

- Work with New Castle County Conservation District and DNREC to provide assistance with stormwater issues and implementation of green-technology best management practices that could be used to reduce pollutants entering the Appoquinimink River and Blackbird Creek.
- Provide homeowners with education and training about best management practices for stormwater in residential areas.
- Require the town engineer to review the town for stormwater-management issues, especially those related to industrial land uses and street upgrades. This information should be used to identify and preserve appropriate land for stormwater-management facilities in anticipation of the need.
- When new stormwater-management regulations become available, adopt those parts that are compatible with Townsend's small-town character.
- The town should continue to locate funding to improve drainage condition by retrofitting stormwater management techniques in the historic and industrial sections of town. In the past, the

town received funding for drainage projects on Taylor Street to mitigate water collecting in residents' basements.

#### Natural Resources Recommendations

- Continue to enforce environmental regulations (including Source Water Protection Ordinances) and adopt additional environmental protection measures as deemed necessary to protect water supplies and the health of the Appoquinimink River.
- Become more involved with conservation measures in the Blackbird Creek watershed to reach TMDL (Total Maximum Daily Loads) goals.
- Consider the adoption of a zoning category that allows agricultural and/or agribusiness uses within the town limits and one dwelling unit per five acres.
- Continue to promote green space by protecting forested lands and requiring that a certain percentage of new subdivision be forested. Discourage clear-cutting and enforce reforestation projects when clear-cutting is necessary.
- Actively promote the development of forested areas through participation in the Urban and Community Forestry Program. This program is administered by the Delaware Forest Service within the Department of Agriculture and offers grants and technical assistance to communities for tree-planting, -care, and -management projects on publicly owned lands.
- Continue to coordinate stormwater-management issues with the New Castle Conservation District, and DNREC to ensure implementation of the Sediment and Stormwater Program. The town should work with the New Castle Conservation District to ensure that sediment and stormwater plan review becomes part of the town's planning process.
- Work with Mountaire Grainry about air-quality issues.
- Research the implementation of an energy-conservation program in town that promotes energy-efficient technology for town projects including street lighting.
- Adopt legislation that would protect identified SRAs (State Resource Area) once in town (via annexations).
- Continue to work towards community wildlife habitat certification.

#### Pedestrian Network and Environment Recommendations

- Continue to offer annexation of properties on the eastern side of town fronting Main Street in order to facilitate the installment of sidewalks to provide lighting and safe corridor for pedestrians.

- Continue negotiations with the rail line to mitigate pedestrian conflicts and potentially redesign the confluence of Main Street and the railroad tracks by adding sidewalk to the left of the signals.
- Re-stripe and nominally realign the town's crosswalks to ensure they are readily visible to pedestrians and drivers and that they lead directly to curb cuts and ramps.
- Work closely with the county to assure that the proposed park is well connected to Townsend's transportation network and that pedestrians need not walk through a large parking lot to gain access. Wherever possible, any park trails should directly access the town's sidewalks.

#### Opportunities for Physical Activity Recommendations

- Consider additional street fairs, events, and festivals to acclimate Townsend residents to walking around and socializing with their neighbors.

#### Transportation Recommendations

- Continue to coordinate with New Castle County and DelDOT to determine the feasibility of annexing the county park and creating a new intersection at South and Commerce Streets.
- Continue to coordinate with the town engineer and DelDOT to prioritize areas for repair and secure funding.
- Create a network of nature trails, walkways, and shared pathways connecting Main Street, the historic section of town, open areas surrounding and, in the subdivisions, the new Municipal Park, the future The Woods At Hidden Creek park, and areas near the school.
- Continue with sidewalk installation on every street in town to promote walkability.
- Put nature trails in the parks.
- Continue to work on Main Street revitalization projects to improve downtown walkability.

#### Community Character and Design Recommendations

- As appropriate, the town should consult with the Office of State Planning Coordination regarding the community design initiatives being undertaken by their office.
- Revise the Zoning and Unified Development Code to assure that pedestrian travel is fluid orientation is required in new developments.
- Consider zoning appropriate portions of the newly annexed lands as "Preservation" to protect environmental and historic resources.

- Consider creating a historic overlay zone of the Historic Register District, with a Historic Review Board that oversees design standards, to provide an additional layer of oversight for development and redevelopment in this area of historic structures. The Town should draft ordinances that apply specifically to the historic core of town and the Main Street Streetscape and the Downtown Revitalization Project proposal area.
- Increase the number of municipal tree-plantings in parks and open spaces along streets. The Town should apply for urban-forestry grants to help offset the costs of planting and maintenance through the Urban and Community Forestry Program. The Town should also work with the New Castle County Cooperative Extension Service or the State Urban Forester to identify the most appropriate species of street trees that survive in an urban environment and do not damage sidewalks.
- Initiate a gateway study of Main Street east of town to SR 71, through WILMAPCO, including the County, DelDOT, and the landowners to make some improvements to this critical area.
- Ensure appropriate development in the north of town to create a distinct boundary between Townsend and Middletown. This should be accomplished through design standards, adequate signage, and a greenbelt.
- Continue to fund the Main Street Streetscape efforts in the three-phase plan as funds become available.
- Continue to monitor and maintain the existing sidewalks in town and the funds become available.
- Continue to support the finance committee's goal to increase revenue through business licensing fees, commercial property re-assessments, or a new business tax.
- Continue to research the feasibility of a downtown-revitalization project that would invest in the town center and support mixed-use development.
- Keep the town's identity of the small and residential community.
- Continue to promote cultural and social events to enhance community cohesiveness between residents in the older section of town and the recently annexed areas.
- Continue discussing the feasibility of participation in a transfer-of-development-rights (TDR) program.
- Continue to work with the existing owners of non-residential properties to clean up trash and debris, especially those within residential districts. Carefully regulate the location and type of any proposed non-residential uses to prevent additional problems.

### Land Use, Annexation, and Areas of Concern Recommendations

- In accordance with state law, bring zoning map into congruence with land use map following adoption of this plan.
- Continue efforts to coordinate future land use strategies through the Southern New Castle County Master Plan.
- Continue involvement with New Castle County in the development of Wiggins Mill Park.
- Continue revisions or additions to the Zoning and Unified Development Code that:
  - Incorporate this plan’s Community Character recommendations.
  - Ensure that future development densities are consistent with the goals and policies of this plan.
  - Examine uses allowed in each zoning district.
  - Possibly create a new zone to implement this plan’s goals concerning redevelopment in the town center redevelopment area.
  - Encourage a diverse and affordable housing stock through mixed-use development, including apartments and townhomes.
  - Promote a mix of residential, commercial, office and “live-work” units in the town-center redevelopment area.